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A

TREATISE

ON

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM,

IN FOUR PARTS;

RELATING TO THE MODE OF BAPTISM; TO THE SUBJECTS; TO THE IMPORT, DESIGN, AND USES OF INFANT BAPTISM; AND TO CLOSE COMMUNION.

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PREFACE.

Several years ago, the author of the following pages published "A Treatise on the Mode and Subjects of Baptism, in two Parts," in reply to a Sermon by Mr. Judson, on the same subject. This Treatise was extensively circulated, and I am not aware that any answer to it has appeared. It has been my intention, for some time past, to revise this work; throw out of it every thing directly and personally controversial; strengthen the positions assumed in it by new facts and arguments, such as have occurred in subsequent reading and reflection; extend the discussion to other connected topics; and put the whole into a shape to be more permanently useful. To the accomplishment of this design I have been frequently urged by respected brethren, ministers and others; but have not been able to attend to it until now.

I shall be disappointed and grieved, if the tendency of what I have here written shall be to excite feelings of asperity and promote dissensions between Orthodox Baptists and Pedobaptists. These denominations of Christians, especially in New England, are united in most points of doctrine and discipline, and are so nearly allied, in many ways, as to render alienation and bitterness altogether inexcusable. As to the principles

and modes of church government, both are in general Congregationalists; and in their views of doctrine, and manner of preaching, and in labors to promote the kingdom of Christ, they harmonize almost as well as the members of either denomination do among themselves. They have, in most respects, the same hopes, and fears, and dangers, and interests,—while the single point of disagreement is *the subject of Baptism*—a subject, to be sure, of very considerable importance, but not, in the judgment of either party, essential to salvation. Between brethren so situated, there obviously ought to be a good understanding, and as much union and affection as possible; and all methods should be taken, not to increase asperities, but to allay them; not to magnify, but to diminish and remove remaining differences of opinion, so far at least as they are a hindrance to good fellowship, and to the mutual exercise of Christian love.

But in what manner shall these differences of opinion be treated, so as to secure this important end? Can they be buried in silence, shut out of sight, and in this way lose their interest, and be forgotten? I have no confidence that such a course of procedure will be adopted, or that such a result can be realized: For, in the first place, our Baptist brethren manifest no disposition to bury their peculiarities in silence; and, secondly, the subject does not seem to be of a nature to be disposed of in this way. It is one of daily concern and practice,—which must necessarily lead to thought and inquiry,—and these will lead to conversation and discussion. Discussion, then, there must be, in some form; and the only question to be determined is, as to the form which it shall assume, and the manner in

which it shall be conducted. Of angry discussion—of vapid and sarcastic declamation, carried on for the purpose of gratifying a party and securing a triumph, there has been enough, and more than enough, already. May such warfare come to a final end. But much as has been written on the subject of baptism, I see no reason to despair of the influence of discussion, kindly, calmly, critically conducted, with a view to discover, and a disposition to receive, the truth. At least, I see no other way in which the differences between Baptists and Pedobaptists are likely ever to be adjusted.

In respect to the manner in which the discussion of disputed points is conducted in the following pages, the religious public will decide. That I have expressed my views, in general, strongly, and written like a man in earnest, I acknowledge. I should have been unjust to my subject, and to my own convictions, if I had done otherwise. But, if I have, in any instance, misrepresented my brethren who differ from me, or treated them unkindly, or their arguments unfairly, or in any way given them needless pain; I shall feel that I have injured myself more than them, and shall be ready, on conviction, to make all the reparation in my power.

The subject of the third part of the following Treatise has been with me in years past, as I fear it has been with not a few of my brethren, comparatively an untrodden field. It certainly is a subject of great importance, and one demanding increased and prayerful attention. I have endeavored to examine it, uncommitted to any theory or hypothesis, and with no object in mind but merely to understand and explain the Scriptures. The views I have expressed, I am satisfied, are not far from the truth. In regard to this part

of the subject, however, I must throw myself on the candor of my brethren, and shall be glad of any suggestions which they may offer.

The subject of close communion I should not have touched in this connexion, could I have been satisfied, without doing it, to have laid down my pen. Whatever may be the result in regard to other points of difference between Orthodox Baptists and Pedobaptists, I do feel that it is high time that close communion was done away. In this nineteenth century, and within sight (as we hope) of the latter day glory, it does seem that persons, who acknowledge each other as true believers and members of the church of Christ—who are embarked in the same great cause and aiming at the same results—who associate in many ways as ministers and private brethren—who agree in all the fundamentals of godliness, and differ only in regard to one of the rites of Christianity;—it does indeed seem that such persons ought to be able to commune together, at least occasionally, at the table of the Lord. I am satisfied that the course of events now in progress is strongly tending to expose and remove close communion; and that the practice cannot be much longer retained without merited injury and disgrace.

The work, such as it is, I would in conclusion commit to those into whose hands it may fall; only claiming for myself the credit of upright intentions, while I cheerfully leave the event with Him who is head over all things to His people.

Bangor, March 15, 1833.

A TREATISE, &c.

PART I.

ON THE MODE OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

Before any thing be offered on the *mode* of baptism, with a view to reconcile differences between Baptists and Pedobaptists, it is important that the point in debate should be accurately stated and rightly understood. The question between the two denominations is not, *whether immersion is valid baptism:* This we admit. Nor is it, *whether this mode of administering baptism is preferable to any other:* For we are willing that those in our churches who prefer immersion should be gratified. Nor is it, *whether immersion has been a frequent mode of baptizing in some past ages:* For this we do not deny.—I do not say that neither of these points is *questionable;* but neither of them is the precise question in dispute.

The point at issue is, in few words, this:—Is IMMERSION ESSENTIAL TO THE ORDINANCE? Our Baptist brethren contend that it is. They tell us that the idea of immersion enters into the very "*nature* of baptism; that the terms baptism and immersion are *equivalent and interchangeable.*"* "The meaning of the word (baptize) is always the same, and *it always signifies to dip. It never has any other meaning.*"† All Baptists hold, that *there*

* Judson's Sermon, p. 14. † Carson and Cox on Baptism, pp. 13, 83.

can be no baptism without immersion; that *this is essential to the ordinance.* To this point, therefore, all their reasonings ought to tend. Whatever they may offer to show that immersion is a valid mode of baptism; or even the most proper mode; or that it was frequently practised in ancient times, has no direct bearing on the controversy, and no tendency to bring it to a close. Let them prove, what we deny, that *immersion is essential to baptism—so essential that there can be no baptism without it,* and our differences on the subject are at an end.

And here, obviously, the burden of proof lies upon them. Theirs is the laboring oar. It is not necessary for us to urge one argument to prove the *negative* of the proposition in debate; it is incumbent on them to prove the *affirmative.*

I am willing, however, to waive any advantage which might arise from acting merely on the defensive. There should be no *special pleading*—no dispute *for victory* on either side. After long and patient examination, I am satisfied that immersion is *not essential* to baptism, and shall proceed to offer reasons in support of this opinion.

1. The rite of immersion is not calculated for *universal practice.* It cannot be administered with prudence and convenience, if indeed it can be administered at all, in all situations and to all persons. Portions of the earth have been discovered, and are inhabited, where collections of water sufficient for this mode of baptizing might not once occur in travelling hundreds of miles. There are other portions, where, amidst mountains of ice and almost perpetual snow, immersions must be very inconvenient and imprudent, if not impracticable. Yet the religion of Christ will one day penetrate these arid, and these frozen regions. Their inhabitants will be *baptized* in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Will they be immersed? Were thousands to come forward

together, in either of the situations to which I have referred, (and such a season of ingathering has once been witnessed under the gospel,) would they, *could* they be immersed? The thing speaks for itself.*

We may suppose another case of frequent occurrence. A person in a declining state of health is brought to the knowledge of the truth, and wishes to obey his Lord's commands. He wishes to be baptized in the name of Christ, and to come to his table. But in his circumstances, to be *immersed* is perhaps impossible. He dares not attempt it. He might not survive the administration. Hence, on the ground of exclusive immersion, he is effectually debarred from the ordinances of the gospel. He can never receive Christian baptism, or partake of the memorials of his Saviour's death. Can it be, then, that the scheme here controverted is according to the gospel? Is it likely that the Lord Jesus, who designed that his religion should be *universal*, has appended to it and made essential a rite, so ill fitted for universal practice?

2. The *signification* of water baptism shows the propriety of some other mode of administration besides immersion. Water baptism is a symbol, an emblem of spiritual baptism. It sets forth, by an expressive sign, the cleansing, purifying operations of the Holy Spirit. Hence, the mode of water baptism might be expected to accord with the mode in which the Divine Spirit is represented as descending upon the heart. But this is uniformly by *pouring* or *sprinkling*. "I will *pour out* my Spirit unto you." "I will *pour* my Spirit on thy seed." "I will *pour out* my Spirit upon all flesh." "He shall come down *like rain* on the mown grass." "I will *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." "So shall he *sprinkle* many nations."† This pouring out and

* See Appendix, Note A.

† Prov. i. 23; Is. xliv. 3; Joel ii. 28; Ps. lxxii. 6; Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Is. lii. 15.

sprinkling of the Holy Ghost is in Scripture called the baptism of the Holy Ghost,—of which water baptism is the instituted sign. It seems evident, therefore, that pouring or sprinkling must be a proper—not to say the *most proper*—mode of water baptism.

The advocates of exclusive immersion have attempted to evade this argument in a variety of ways. Some have said, that none were ever baptized with the Holy Ghost except on the day of Pentecost; and that then the Spirit was so copiously poured out, that the disciples may be said to have been immersed in it.* But not to insist on the absurdity of this representation—the Spirit *poured upon* the disciples, till they were *immersed* or *plunged into* it!!—it is certain that *all* regenerated persons have been baptized with the Spirit. "By one Spirit are we *all* baptized into one body." 1 Cor. xii. 13.

Others have said, that the *pouring out* of the Spirit, and the *baptism* of the Spirit are not the same;—that the Divine influence is first *shed forth*, and then the believer is *plunged into* it.† But this account of the matter is in plain contradiction to the Scriptures. Our Saviour promised his disciples, just before his ascension, that they should "be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." But, speaking of this *same event*, almost immediately after, he describes it as "the Holy Ghost *coming upon* them." Peter also speaks of this memorable *baptism* with the Spirit, as a fulfilment of the prediction of Joel, "I will *pour out* of my Spirit upon all flesh." Acts i. 5, 8, and ii. 17. So when Peter preached to Cornelius and his family, "the Holy Ghost," he says, "*fell on them*, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be *baptized with the Holy Ghost*." Acts xi. 15. Moreover, Paul represents the

* See Judson's Sermon, p. 8. † Carson and Cox on Baptism, p. 171.

baptism of the Spirit, as "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he *shed on us* abundantly." Tit. iii. 5, 6. In view of passages such as these, who can avoid seeing and acknowledging, that the *falling*, the *pouring*, the *shedding forth* of the Spirit, and the *baptism* of the Spirit are the same?

It is sometimes urged, that baptism with water is not significant of the baptism of the Spirit, but rather of the *burial and resurrection of Christ.* "We are buried with him in baptism into death." See Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12. But if baptism with water is not significant of the baptism of the Spirit, then why are the two baptisms placed by Christ in such immediate connexion? "Except a man be born of *water* and the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "John truly baptized with *water*, but ye shall be baptized with the *Holy Ghost.*" John iii. 5. Acts i. 5. And why is the renewing of the Holy Ghost spoken of at all under the figure of a baptism, if this renewal is not the thing signified, shadowed forth, in literal baptism?—The passages above referred to, in which believers are said to be "buried with Christ by baptism into death," do not seem to me to have any reference to the mode of baptism with water. The thing here spoken of is *spiritual* baptism*—"the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." In regeneration, believers are said "to *die* unto sin." They are spiritually "crucified with Christ," die with him, are buried with him, and rise with him to "newness of life and to new obedience." But what has all this to do with the *mode* of water baptism? And how far can it go towards proving that a total immersion in water is *essential* to the ordinance?†

* "The Apostle is speaking of *spiritual* circumcision, and *spiritual* baptism." Judson's Sermon, p. 23.

† See Appendix, Note B.

3. The original words used to denote the ordinance of baptism do not uniformly signify immersion.—It is conceded that the controversy respecting the mode of baptism rests very materially on the meaning of these words. Says a distinguished Baptist writer, "had the Greek word *βαπτιζω* been *translated* in the English version of the New Testament, there would have been no dispute among English readers concerning its import."* And why, then, was not this Greek word translated? If it has, as is pretended, one plain and uniform signification, why was not this signification given? On Baptist principles, no answer can be returned to these inquiries, which will not be a reflection on the translators. Will it be said that they did not *know* the import of the word? Then they were inadequate to their great undertaking. Will it be said that knowing it, they chose not to give it? Then they weakly shrunk from the duty assigned them, and are in a measure chargeable with all the evil that has ensued. Why was not this Greek word translated? On the ground taken by Pedobaptists, the whole matter is plain. It was because the translators knew of no word in our language, which fully answered to it in signification. They did not render it *immerse*, because they knew it did not uniformly signify immerse. And they did not render it *pour* or *sprinkle*, because they knew that such was not its uniform signification. They chose in most cases to *transcribe* the word, and not translate it —to leave it as they found it—and thus leave every one at liberty to practise that mode of baptism which he judged to be right.† The fact, that not only the translators

* Judson's Sermon, p. 3.

† It should be observed, that our English translators have sometimes *translated* the words denoting baptism; and in every instance have given to them the sense of *washing*. See Mark vii. 4. Luke xi. 38. Heb. ix. 10. In the Peshito, or old Syriac version of the New Testament, *βαπτιζω* is rendered by a word which signifies to *confirm* or *establish*.

of our English Bible, but translators and lexicographers generally, have chosen to *transcribe* rather than *translate* this word, is proof enough that they have not considered it as uniformly implying immersion.

There are three sources from which light may be obtained in regard to the signification of disputed terms, viz. *etymology*, *authority*, and *general use*.

(1.) It appears from the *etymology* of the word βαπτιζω, that it does not uniformly denote immersion. It is a derivative from βαπτω—a word which, it is now by all admitted, does not always signify *immerse*.

Scapula renders βαπτω (mergo, immergo, tingo, lavo,) *to immerse, to dye, to wash*.

Coulon renders it (mergo, tingo, abluo) *to immerse, to dye, to cleanse by washing*.*

Ursinus says, βαπτω signifies *to dip, to dye, to wash, to sprinkle* (abluo, aspergo.)†

Keckerman tells us that βαπτω signifies, not only to dip, but also *to sprinkle* (aspergo.)‡

But it is needless to multiply authorities, since Baptist writers admit that βαπτω does not uniformly denote immersion. Mr. Carson insists, that this word signifies *to dye*, as well as *to dip*, and to dye or color *in any manner*.§ In proof of this, he cites a number of incontestable examples. A learned Baptist, the author of Letters to Bishop Hoadly, also says, "that βαπτω signifies *to sprinkle*," and that it "is not used in the Septuagint in any one place where the very frequent ceremony of washing the whole body occurs."‖

It is obviously used in a number of places where it does not imply immersion. "The priest *shall wet* (βαψει) his finger απο του αιματος with the blood." Lev. iv. 17.

* Lexic. Homeric. † Explic. Catech. Pars ii. Quest. 69.
‡ Syst. Theol. Lib. iii. Cap. 8. § Carson and Cox on Baptism, p. 59.
‖ Ib. pp. 27, 28.

"And he (the priest) *shall wet* (*βαψει*) his right finger *απο του ελαιου* with the oil." Lev. xiv. 16. "*Wetting* it (the bundle of hyssop) with the blood, *βαψαντες απο του αιματος*." Ex. xii. 22. The preposition *απο*, used in each of these cases, absolutely forbids the idea of immersion.

In Dan. v. 21, *βαπτω* is rendered by our translators *was wet*. "His body (*εβαφη*) *was wet* with the dew of heaven." Certainly, the body of Nebuchadnezzar was not *immersed* in the dew.

In Ezek. xxiii. 15, this word is rendered *dyed*. "Exceeding in (*παραβαπτα*) *dyed* attire upon their heads."

Other Greek writers furnish numerous examples in which *βαπτω* does not signify immerse.

Sophocles says (*ἐβαψας εὐ*) "thou hast well *stained* or *glutted* thy sword *προς Αργειων στρατω with* or *by means of* the Grecian army."* The preposition *προς* is inconsistent with the idea of immersion.

Callimachus and his commentators use *βαπτω* in the sense of *ἀντλεω*, to draw up. "To-day, ye bearers of water, *μη βαπτετε draw up* none."† Neander, in his note on this passage, says, "*αὐτην αλα βαπτε draw up* the sea water."

In Suidas de Hierocle we have an account of a person who was severely scourged before the tribunal; and "while flowing with blood, (*βαψας*) *having filled* the hollow of his hand, he sprinkled the judgment seat."‡ He surely could not have *immersed* his hand in the blood that was flowing from his own body.

Hippocrates, speaking of a certain liquid, says, "when it drops upon the garments, (*βαπτεται*) they *are dyed*."‡ Here, the word can neither signify *immerse*, nor dying *by immersion*. The liquid *drops upon* the colored garments.

* Ajax v. 95. † Hymn. in Lavaer. Pallad. 45.

‡ In Carson and Cox on Baptism, pp. 26, 60, 61.

Æschylus says, "This garment (εβαψεν) *stained* by the sword of Ægisthus, is a witness unto me."* The garment must have been stained by the blood *flowing down* over it.

Homer, in his Battle of the Frogs and Mice, says, "He fell, and breathed no more, and the lake (εβαπτετο) *was tinged* with the purple blood."† "What a monstrous paradox in rhetoric," says Mr. Carson, "is the figure of *the dipping of a lake* in the blood of a mouse! Never was there such a figure. The lake is not said to be *dipped in* blood, but to be *dyed with* blood."

Aristophanes says, that "Magnes, an old comic poet of Athens, used the Lydian music, and shaved his face, (βαπτομενος) *smearing* it with tawny washes." He did not *dip his face into* the wash, but *rubbed the wash upon* his face.‡

Aristotle speaks of a substance which, "being pressed, (βαπτει) *staineth* the hand."‖ Here, surely, there is no reference to *dipping*. The hand is stained or colored, by pressing the coloring substance.

Βαπτω was often used by the ancients to signify a coloring of the *hair* or *beard;* in none of which instances can it denote immersion.

Ælian, speaking of an old coxcomb, says, "He endeavored to conceal the hoariness of his hair by (βαφη) *coloring* it.§

Appollonius, disproving the claims of certain false prophets, and ridiculing their attention to dress, asks, "Does a prophet (βαπτειν) *color* his hair?"¶

Nicolas of Damascus, contrasting the conduct of a parasite and of his patron, asks, "Does a patron affect to be

* In Carson and Cox on Baptism, pp. 26, 60, 61. † Batrach. v. 248.
‡ Aristoph. Hipp. v. 520. ‖ Aristot. de Hist. Anim.
§ Lib. vii. Cap. 20. ¶ Euseb. Ecc. Hist. Lib. v. Cap. 18.

younger than he is? Or does he (*βαπτεται*) *color* his hair?"*

"Some say, Nicylla, that you (*βαπτειν*) *color* your hair."†

"You (*βαπτεις*) *color* your head, but you can never (*βαψεις*) *color* old age."†

Lucian speaks of those (*βαψοντες*) *dying* purple; and Aristophanes of (*ορνις βαπτος*) a *colored* or *speckled* bird.‡

In view of these examples, the meaning of *βαπτω* cannot be mistaken. That it is often used to signify *immerse*, I have no doubt; but that this is not its *uniform* meaning is certain. In the instances above cited, we see it used to denote *filling; wetting by distillation;* and *coloring*,—by the dropping, the sprinkling, the flowing, the rubbing, and the pressing, of the coloring substance.

Such, then, is the primitive word, *βαπτω*. And what are we to infer from it respecting the sense of the derivative *βαπτιζω*, the word used in reference to the ordinance of baptism? Pedobaptist writers have generally insisted that *βαπτιζω* is not only a derivative, but a *diminutive*, of a more general signification than *βαπτω*, and importing less strongly the idea of immersion. Most Baptist writers, on the contrary, allege, that the two words are essentially synonymous; at least, that the latter implies immersion no more strongly than the former.‖ It is not important to discuss this matter here. It cannot be supposed that

* Carson and Cox on Baptism, p. 61.

† Epigram. Collect. Bentlei, p. 139. ‡ Ewing's Greek Lexicon.

‖ Mr. Judson says that "the word denoting baptism is derived from the verbal of the primitive word (*βαπτω*) by a change in the termination *which never affects the primary idea.*" Accordingly he renders "*βαπτω* to immerse, *βαπτος* immersed, and *βαπτιζω* to make immersed, to immerse." Sermon on Baptism, pp. 3, 4.

Dr. Gale, in his Reflections on Wall's History of Infant Baptism, decides that *βαπτω* and *βαπτιζω* "are (*ισοδυναμαι*) *exactly the same as to signification.*"

the derivative should be stronger than its primitive, or be more particular and limited in its signification; and we are willing to assume that, so far as relates to the main question at issue, both are of the same import. What, then, is the conclusion in regard to *βαπτιζω*? Clearly, that it does not always denote immersion. It may be used, like *βαπτω*, to signify *immerse;* but if it is essentially synonymous with this latter word, it may be used in other senses, and must be capable of a more general signification..

(2.) Let us next have recourse to *authority* in settling the signification of *βαπτιζω*, and of the substantives derived from it.

STEPHANUS, in his Thesaurus, first gives to *βαπτιζω* the special import of immersing, and then the more general one of *cleansing* or *washing*. *Βαπτισμος* he translates immersion, *washing*, *ablution*.

SCAPULA renders these words in the same manner as Stephanus. *Βαπτιζω*, to immerse, to *wash*, (abluo lavo.) *Βαπτισμος*, immersion, *washing*, *ablution*, (lotio, ablutio.)

PASSOR gives a similar rendering to both these words. *Βαπτιζω*, to immerse, to *wash*, (abluo, lavo.) *Βαπτισμος*, immersion, *washing*, (lotio.)

SUIDAS gives to *βαπτιζω*, not only the signification of dipping and dying, but also the more general ones of *wetting*, *washing*, *purging*, *cleansing*, (madefacio, lavo, abluo, purgo, mundo.)

HEDERICUS follows Stephanus and Scapula in rendering *βαπτιζω* to immerse, *to wash*, (mergo, immergo, abluo, lavo.)

COULON calls baptism "a sacred mystery of the entrance into Christianity, administered in the church (mersione, ablutione, et aspersione) by immersion, *washing*, and *sprinkling*."

PARKHURST translates *βαπτιζω* to immerse in, or *wash with* water, in token of purification from sin."

AINSWORTH says, "to baptize is to wash any one in the sacred baptismal font, or to *sprinkle* on him the consecrated waters."

SCHLEUSNER renders *βαπτιζω*, first, to immerse in water; and secondly, to *wash* or *cleanse* with water, (abluo, lavo, aqua purgo.)

WAHL (Robinson's translation) renders the same word, first, *to wash, to perform ablution, to cleanse;* secondly, to immerse, to administer the rite of baptism.

W. GREENFIELD translates the word, as used in the New Testament, *to wash, to perform ablution, to cleanse,* to immerse, to overwhelm, to administer the rite of baptism.

In the Lexicon of Ewing, *βαπτιζω* is said to be used in the following senses:—"I cover with water, or some other fluid, in whatever manner this is done, whether by immersion or affusion, wholly or partially, permanently or for a moment. Hence, the word is used in several different senses, referring either mediately or immediately to the primary idea; as 1. I plunge or sink completely under water. 2. I cover partially with water. 3. I overwhelm or cover with water, by rushing, flowing, or pouring upon. 4. I drench or impregnate with liquor by affusion. 5. I oppress or overwhelm, in a metaphorical sense, by bringing affliction or distress upon. 6. I wash, in general, without specifying the mode. 7. I wash for the special purpose of symbolical, ritual, or ceremonial purification. 8. I administer the ordinance of Christian baptism, I baptize."

From the testimony of lexicographers, we may proceed to that of learned critics and theologians.

PISCATOR. "*Βαπτιζω* signifies not only to be dipped,

but also in any other way to be *tinged, washed,* or *rinsed,* (lavari et ablui.)*

Bucanus. "*Βαπτιζω* signifies to immerse, to tinge, to *wash* (abluere.") "Baptism is taken properly in Scripture for *simple washing* (pro simplici ablutione) whether Levitical or Pharisaical."†

Zanchius. "This word *βαπτιζω* doth as well signify to dye, and simply to *wash,* (lavare) as to immerse."‡

Maldonat. "With the Greeks, *βαπτιζειν* signifies to dip, to *wash,* to *wash oft,* (lavare, abluere) and as Tertullian uses to turn it, to tinge or dye."‖

Bonaventure. "*Βαπτιζω* in Greek signifies as much as *lavo* in Latin," i. e. *to wash.*§

Peter Martyr. "*Βαπτιζω* signifies, not only to dip, but in any way to *tinge* or *wet.*"¶

Whitaker. "The word *βαπτιζω* signifies, not only to immerse, but also to *tinge* or *wet.*"**

Vorrilong. "*βαπτιζω* in Greek is the same that *lavo* is in Latin." "Baptism, properly speaking, signifies nothing (nisi lotionem) except washing."††

Alstedius. "The term baptism signifies both immersion and *sprinkling,* (aspersionem) and of consequence ablution."‡‡

Zelenus. "Baptism signifies dipping, and also *sprinkling.*"‖‖‖

Mastricht. "Baptism signifies washing, either by *sprinkling* or dipping."‖‖‖

* Com. Loc. de Baptismo, pp. 157, 153. † Loc. Com. 47. p. 605.

‡ De Cultu Dei, Lib. i. Cap. 16.

‖ In Matt. xxviii. 19. Tertullian observes concerning baptism, (de Anima, Cap. 10.) that it means (mergere non tantum, sed et *perfundere*) not only to immerse, but also to *pour.*

§ In Walker's Doctrine of Baptisms, Chap. 3.

¶ In Rom. Cap. x.

** Phælect. de Sacram. Baptismi, p. 217. †† Works, Lib. iv.

‡‡ Encyclop. Lib. xxv. Sec. iii. Loc. 40.

‖‖‖ In Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. Part ii. Chap. 9.

J. Wickliffe. "It matters not whether persons are dipped once, or three times, or whether water were poured upon their heads."*

Lyndwood. "Dipping is not to be accounted to be of the essence of baptism, but it may be given also by *pouring* or *sprinkling*."*

Flacius Illyricus. "Baptism properly signifies *intinction*, a word used by Tertullian; and, *per Metalepsin*, it hath the signification of *ablution* and *lotion*."†

Pareus. "Baptism, with the Greeks, imports any washing or cleansing, whether it be done by dipping or *sprinkling*."‡

Ursinus renders βαπτισμος *washing*, as well as dipping.‖

Trelcatius says. "baptism, according to the etymology of it, signifies commonly any kind of ablution or cleansing."§

Wollebius. "Baptism signifies dipping and *sprinkling*, and by consequence *ablution*, or *cleansing by washing*."¶

Peter Lombard. "Baptism signifies *intinction*, i. e. a washing of the body (ablutio) with a prescribed form of words."**

Nicolaus de Orbellis. "Baptism is a washing or ablution in water."††

Danæus. "Baptism signifies not only immersion, but also lotion and ablution; and not only are they baptized who are wholly dipped in water, but they that are *tinged* or *wetted* with water."‡‡

* In Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. Part ii. Chap. 9. † Clavis Scripturae.
‡ In Heb. ix. 10. ‖ Explic. Catech. Ques. 69.
§ Instit. Lib. ii. Cap. de Baptismo. ¶ Chris. Theol. Lib. i. Cap. 23.
** In Walker's Doctrine of Baptisms, Chap. 6.
†† Ques. i. de Baptismo.
‡‡ Responsio ad Bellarm. Tom. de Sacram. Cap. i.

Lightfoot. "The application of water is of the essence of baptism; but the application of it in this or that manner, speaks but a circumstance."*

Musculus. "As for dipping the infant, we judge that not so necessary, but that it is free for the church to baptize either by dipping or sprinkling."†

Thomas Aquinas. "Baptism may be given, not only by immersion, but also by *affusion* of water, or *sprinkling* with it."‡

Featly. "Christ no where requireth dipping, but only baptizing; which word Hesychius, Stephanus, Scapula, and Buddæus, those great masters of the Greek tongue, make good by very many instances out of the classic writers, importeth no more than *ablution* or *washing*."‖

Leigh. "Baptism is such a kind of washing as is by plunging; and yet it is taken more largely for any kind of washing, where there is no dipping at all."‖

Dominicus Sotus. "In baptism, there is something essential, as the washing; and something accidental, namely, the washing in this or the other manner."§

Calvin. "Whether the person baptized be wholly immersed, and whether thrice or once, or whether water be only *poured* or *sprinkled* upon him, is of no importance."¶

Beza. "They are rightly baptized who are baptized by *sprinkling*."**

Hemingius. "As often as we see infants *sprinkled* with the water of baptism, we are reminded of their secret regeneration."††

* Horae Hebraicae in Matt. iii. 6.
† Loci Communes de Baptismo, p. 431.
‡ In Wall's Hist of In. Baptism, Part ii. Chap. 9.
‖ In Critica Sacra.
§ Distinc. iii. Quest. i. Art. 7.
¶ Institutes Vol. iii. p. 313.
** Tract. Theol. Vol. iii. p. 195.
†† Com. on John iii. 5.

ATTERSOL. "Dipping into water is not necessary to the being of a sacrament. Sprinkling of water is not necessary to the being of a sacrament. But wetting and washing with water are necessary to the being of a sacrament."*

HAMMOND. "By Christ's appointment, whosoever may be received into his family should be received with this ceremony of water; therein to be dipped three times; or instead of that to be *sprinkled*, with it."†

WALL. "The word *βαπτιζω* in Scripture signifies *to wash in general*, without determining the sense to this or that sort of washing."‡

POOL. "Why does Mark use *βαπτιζεσθαι* or *νιπτεσθαι*," in Mark vii. 4? "Answer. It was lawful to wash the hand in either mode, either by *pouring on* water, or by immersing them ..... so that it is not without reason that a word is used which is common to either mode."||

WITSIUS. "We are not to imagine that immersion is so necessary to baptism, that it cannot be duly performed by pouring water all over, or by *aspersion*."§

OWEN. "Baptism is any kind of washing, whether by dipping or *sprinkling*."¶

TILENUS. "If we regard the etymology of the word baptism, it signifies dipping, and also *sprinkling*."**

KECHERMAN. Baptism signifies either immersion, or *washing* or *pouring* (perfusionem.")††

FLAVEL. "The word baptize signifying as well to wash as to plunge; a person may be truly baptized that is not plunged.‡‡

GLAS. "Immersion cannot be called baptism, any

* Treatise of the Sacraments p. 108.
† Pract. Catechism, p. 154.
‡ Hist. of In. Pap. Part. ii. Chap. 8.
|| Synopsis on Mark vii. 4.
§ Econ. of Covenants, Vol. iii. p. 392.
¶ Com. on Heb. ix. 10.
** Disput. de Baptismo, p. 883.
†† Theol. Syst. Disp. 37.
‡‡ Works, Vol. ii. p. 432.

otherwise than as it is a mode of washing with water."*

Doederlein. "The power of the word βαπτιζω is expressed (in lavando, abluendo) in *washing* or *performing ablution*; on which account we read of the baptism of cups, in Mark vii, 8, and the rite itself is called (καθαρισμος) a *purifying*, in John iii. 25."†

Morus. "To baptize is in a solemn manner to immerse a man in water, or to pour water upon him."‡

Adam Clarke. "To say that sprinkling is no gospel baptism is as incorrect as to say that immersion is none. Such assertions are as unchristian as they are uncharitable. Those who are dipped in water in the name of the Trinity, I believe to be baptized. Those who are washed or sprinkled with water in the name of the Trinty, I believe to be equally so; and the repetition of such a baptism I believe to be profane. Others have a right to believe the contrary, if they see good."||

This list of quotations need not to be enlarged. The reader will see what the opinion of distinguished men—lexicographers, critics, and theologians§—has been, in regard to the point before us; and on a question of this nature, the judgment of the learned ought to have weight. —I know it will be said, that *authority* is pleaded on the other side; and that quotations have been given from Pedobaptist writers, seeming to favor the idea of exclusive immersion. But in making these quotations, our brethren have not always treated either their authors or the public fairly. In selecting single sentences, or parts of sentences, from large works, where saving clauses and

* Diss. on In. Bap. p. 25. † Institut. Theol. Chris. Vol. ii. p. 743.

‡ Commentarius Ex. His. Vol. ii. p. 491.

|| Comment. on Mat. iii. 6. and Mark xvi. 16.

§ Mr Carson, while endeavoring to show that βαπτιζω "*always* signifies to dip," concedes, that he has "*all* the lexicographers and commentators *against him*, in that opinion." p. 79.

qualifying words and phrases are omitted, authors may easily be made to speak a language which they never intended, and wrong impressions may be left upon the public mind. It is true, that some Pedobaptists have been partial to immersion, and have wished that it might come into more general use; but where is the Pedobaptist who, (judged of, not by insulated passages, but by the *whole* of his works) has maintained that immersion is *essential* to baptism? For this, it will be recollected, is the point at issue, *Is immersion essential?* Truly, I know of no such Pedobaptist. Whatever the *preferences* of individuals may have been, writers of this class would say, with united voice, that immersion is *not* essential to baptism; that the ordinance may be validly administered in other modes.

(3.) We come now to consider the import of *βαπτιζω*, and the kindred terms, as exhibited in their *general use.* My object will be to show, that these words are often used by writers, sacred and profane, to signify something less than a total immersion.

The Sibylline verse concerning the city of Athens, as quoted by Plutarch in his life of Theseus, is as follows:

Ασχος βαπτιζη, δε τοι θεμις εστι.

"Thou mayest be baptized, O bladder, but it is not permitted to thee to go under the water."—The representation is that of a leathern bottle or bladder cast upon the water, but which can hardly be pressed under it;—importing that though the Athenian state might be brought into great dangers, it could not be destroyed. The idea of immersion is of course precluded.

Aristotle says, "The Phenicians who inhabit Cadiz relate, that, sailing beyond Hercules' pillars with the wind at East, in four days they came to a land uninhabited, whose coast was full of sea weeds, and is not (*βαπτιζεσθαι*) covered with water at ebb; but when the tide comes in, it is

entirely overwhelmed."*—Here is a baptism, but no immersion. The coast was not plunged into the tide, but the tide flowed over the coast.

Homer, representing the death of one of his heroes, says, "He struck him across the neck with his heavy sword, and the sword became warm with blood." One ancient Greek critic remarks on this passage thus; "The sword is represented as (εβαπισθη) *baptized* with blood:" Another says, "In this phrase Homer expresses himself with the greatest energy, signifying that the sword was so (βαπισθεντος) *baptized* in blood, that it was even heated by it."* But how could a sword be *plunged* into the blood of a man, in cutting off his head? Doubtless it was more or less stained with blood. By a strong figure, it might be said to be bathed in blood. But in this case, the bathing must have been effected by the blood flowing over the sword, and not by the sword being plunged into the blood.

In his account of the Platonic Banquet, Aristophanes acknowledges that he had been (βεβαπισμενον) *baptized* with wine on the preceding day.† Surely he had not been, either literally or figuratively, *plunged into* wine; but the wine had been *poured* into him. Figuratively, he had been *overcome* by it.

Mr. Ewing, in his greek Lexicon (Art. βαπτιζω) has several examples of the same kind." *Βεβαπισθαι τω οινω*, to be *baptized* with wine." *Οινω δε πολλω Αλεξανδρον βαπτισασα.* Having *baptized* Alexander with much wine."

A few examples of the figurative use of βαπτιζω by profane authors will show, that this word is not altogether so determinate in its signification, as some men seem to imagine.

* In Carson and Cox on Baptism, pp. 17, 86.
† In Quarterly Review, Vol. xxiv. p. 431.

Diodorus Siculus says, "On account of the abundant supply from these sources, they do not (*βαπτιζουσι*) *oppress* the common people with taxes."*

Josephus speaks of some who, without engaging in faction, afterwards (*εβαπτισαν*) *oppressed* the city."†

Plutarch says "(*βεβαπτισμενοι*) *oppressed* with a debt of five thousand myriads."‡

Josephus, speaking of the purification from defilement by a dead body, says, "and (*βαπτισαντες*) *having baptized* some of the ashes with spring water, they sprinkled," &c.|| From the direction in the ceremonial law, we know how this baptism was performed. "They shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer, and *running water shall be put thereto* in a vessel, and a clean person shall sprinkle it." Numb. xix. 17. This *putting of running water to the ashes* is called by Josephus a *baptizing of the ashes.*

In Ecclesiasticus xxxiv. 30, we have a similar use of the word *βαπτιζω.* "He (*βαπτιζομενος*) that is *baptized* or *purified* from the touch of a dead body, and again toucheth it, what is he profited (*τω λουτρω*) by his *washing?*" Here, the purification from the touch of a dead body, which consisted (in part at least) in being sprinkled and washing the clothes,§ is called a baptism. It is also called (*λουτρον*) a *washing*, making baptizing and washing to be of the same import.

In Judith xii. 7, Judith is said to have gone out "in the night, and (*εβαπτιζετο*) *baptized* herself in the camp (*επι της πηγης*) *at* the fountain of water." The preposition here used, (*επι*) as well as the circumstances of the case, forbid the supposition that Judith *plunged* herself into the fountain. She went and *washed herself at it;* and this washing is called a baptism.

* Lib. 50. Cap. 73.
† Joseph. de Bello, iv. 3.
‡ In Carson and Cox on Baptism, p. 131.
|| Antiq. Lib. iv. Cap. 4.
§ See Numbers xix. 19.

The use of the words denoting baptism by the Christian Fathers is decisive against the idea of exclusive immersion.

Justyn Martyr, in his Apology to Antonius, when describing the baptism of the early Christians, repeatedly calls it (λουτρον) a *washing;* and he quotes Isaiah as predicting this rite in the following words; "*Wash you*, make you clean," &c. Chap. i. 16. Indeed, this mode of representing the subject is very common in the writings of the Fathers. The words λουτρον, lavandi, abluendi, diluendi, lavationis, lavacri, &c. importing no more than *washing* in the general, were in perpetual use among them, in connexion with the administration of baptism.

Tertullian speaks of baptism being administered by *sprinkling*. Who will accommodate you, a man whose penitence is so little to be trusted (asperginem unam aquae) with one *sprinkling of water*!"*

Origen represents the wood on the altar, over which water was *poured* at the command of Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 33) as having been *baptized*.† This baptism, we know was effected by pouring.

Lactantius says that Christ received baptism, "that he might save the Gentiles by baptism, that is (purificroris perfusione) by *the distilling of the purifying* dew."‡ In this instance, the water of baptism is represented as *falling* like the dew.

Cyprian, Jerome, and some other of the fathers, understood the prediction, "I will *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," (Ezek. xxxvi. 25) as having reference to water baptism.§

Clemens Alexandrinus, speaking of a backslider

* De Pœnit. Cap. 6. † In Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. Part ii. p. 302.
‡ Opera. Lib. iv. Cap. 15.
§ Opera. Cyp. Lib. ii. Epis. 7. Epis. 83 Hieron.

whom John was the means of reclaiming, says, "he was baptized a second time *with tears.*"*

Athanasius reckons up eight several baptisms; 1. that of the flood; 2. that of Moses in the sea; 3. the legal baptism of the Jews after uncleanness; 4. that of John Baptist; 5. that of Jesus; 6. of tears; 7. of martyrdom; and 8. of eternal fire."†

Gregory Nazianzen says, "I know of a fourth baptism, that by martyrdom and *blood;* and I know of a fifth, that of *tears.*"†

Basil tell us of a martyr that "was baptized into Christ *with his own blood.*"†

The author of the Responses to Antiochus (attributed to Athanasius) says; "God hath granted unto man three purging baptisms; that of water, that of the testimony of one's *own blood*, and that of *tears.*"†

The baptism of tears and blood was a favorite phraseology with the early Christians. It is needless to remark, that these baptisms, whether understood literally or figuratively, are altogether inconsistent with the idea of immersion.

The word βαπτιζω occurs in the Septuagint in the following connexion: Naaman came to the prophet Elisha to be cleansed of his leprosy; "and Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and (λουσαι) *wash* in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again unto thee, and thou shalt be clean." "Then he went and (εβαπτισατο) *baptized* himself seven times in Jordan, *according to the saying of the man of God*, and his flesh came again as the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." 2 Kings v. 10, 14. It is obvious that βαπτιζω is here used as synonymous with λουω, a word which signifies, in the general, to *wash.* Naaman was directed by the prophet to wash

* Euseb. Ecc. Hist. Lib. iii. Cap. 20.

† In Walker's Doctrine of Baptisms, Chap. 6.

himself in Jordan; and he went and washed *according to the saying of the man of God.* Yet this last washing is expressly called *a baptism.*

The apostle Paul informs us that the congregation of Israel "were *baptized* unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea." 1 Cor. x. 2. But how were this great congregation baptized? Certainly not by an *immersion in the waters;* for we read expressly that "they went into the midst of the sea upon *dry ground.*" Ex. xiv. 22. We may be told of the propriety of representing their situation, with the sea on each side, and the cloud covering them, as an immersion in the cloud and in the sea; but until it can be explained how they could be plunged into the water, while they were walking on dry ground, it will remain certain that their baptism was not by immersion.*

The same Apostle also informs us, that the service of the sanctuary under the former dispensation consisted, among other things, in (διαφοροις βαπτισμοις) "divers *washings*" or *baptisms.* Heb. ix. 10. In the verses following, he relates how the unclean were at that time *sprinkled* with water and with blood; and that "Moses took the blood of calves, and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and *sprinkled* both the book and all the people." Is it not evident, then, that among the "divers baptisms" practised by the Jews, the Apostle included these divers sprinklings? If we suppose him to refer to their purifications generally, some of which consisted in bathing, he must have referred to their sprinklings as well as their bathings; and, consequently, must

* Professor Robinson thinks that, by the *wall of waters* on each side of the Israelites, during their passage through the sea, we are to understand, that there was a *body of water* above them, and below them; while by the ebbing of the tide, and the miraculous driving back of the sea by a strong east wind, the fording place over which they passed was dry ground. See Biblical Repository for Oct. 1832, p. 755.

have used the word *baptisms* to denote other modes of applying water besides a total immersion.

It is said "of the Pharisees and all the Jews," that "when they come from the market, except they (βαπτίζωνται) be *baptized*, they eat not." Mark vii. 4. And when a certain Pharisee invited our Lord "to dine with him, he marvelled that he had not first (ἐβαπτίσθη) *been baptized* before dinner." Luke xi. 38. But was it a custom with all the Jews to be *immersed* before eating? Or did the Pharisee marvel, that our Lord, before he sat down to meat, was not *immersed?* If the case is not sufficiently clear of itself, it is easy to prove, and from the highest authority, that the Jews did not practise immersion previous to their meals, but merely a washing of the hands. "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders, for they *wash not their hands* when they eat bread?" Matt. xv. 2. "The Pharisees and all the Jews, except they *wash their hands oft*, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders." Mark vii. 3. Maimonides says, "A man shall not need to wash his hands as oft as he eats, if he do not go abroad, or meddle with business, or go to the market, or avert his mind another way; but if he do, he is bound to *wash his hands* as oft as there is need of washing."* In view of these representations, is it not certain, that the baptisms which the Jews practised previous to their meals, and which the Pharisee marvelled that our Saviour should neglect, were merely *a washing of the hands?*

It is also said that "there be many other things which the Jews have received to hold, as the (βαπτισμους) *bap-*

* In Scott on Mark vii. 3. Kuinoel says, "It is not probable that the Pharisees imposed this burthen upon themselves, that whenever they came in from abroad, they laid aside their garments, and immersed their bodies in water; neither can it be proved, by sufficient arguments, that they had such a custom." Com. on Mark vii. 4.

tisms of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and of tables." Mark vii. 4. If it is likely that, in washing, the Jews immersed their small cups, is it at all likely that they immersed their pots and kettles, their brazen vessels and their tables? Do *we* find this the most convenient method of washing such articles? And especially should we, if, after the Jewish custom, we *reclined* at our meals, and of consequence were obliged to construct our tables much larger than they are at present? Accordingly, Pool determines, in view of the word *baptism* in this place, that "it does not always denote immersion, but sometimes *washing* only, or even *sprinkling*."*

I have noticed, in another connexion, those passages which speak of the baptism of the Spirit. It is important that they be adverted to again, as exhibiting the manner in which the sacred writers use the words *baptize* and *baptism*. These writers evidently speak of the *pouring out* of the Spirit, as synonymous with the *baptism* of the Spirit; and, consequently, it would seem that pouring must be a significant and proper mode of baptizing.

We have now fully examined the words denoting baptism. We have considered their *etymology*, adduced numerous and respectable *authorities*, and traced them in their *general use*. And we are brought irresistibly to the conclusion, that *they do not uniformly signify or imply immersion*. This conclusion places another on an immoveable basis—*immersion is not essential to Christian baptism*.

4. The circumstances attending most of the baptisms recorded in the New Testament indicate some other mode besides immersion.

The first in order are the baptisms by John. That

* Synopsis in loc.

this great reformer and prophet baptized at Jordon and Enon is no certain evidence that he baptized by immersion. The convenience of the multitudes by which he was thronged made it necessary that he should reside, for the most part, in the vicinity of "much water." Many circumstances of his baptism seem inconsistent with immersion, and render it probable that he practised ordinarily some other mode. He baptized "in the *desert*," as well as at Jordon. He baptized *with* water, as well as *in* it.* He baptized in the open fields, where there were no accommodations for a change of apparel. And more than all, he baptized vast multitudes in a little time. His ministry could not have continued more than a year and a half; in which time he baptized "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan." Matt. iii. 5. Some Baptists have thought it probable that he baptized, at least, 500,000 persons. But to immerse these in a year and a half, allowing only a minute for the immersion of each, he must have been constantly in the water, every day, for more than fifteen hours. Is it credible that he should do this; especially since we are assured that he "did no miracle?" John x. 41. Is it credible, then, that, in ordinary cases, John baptized by immersion?†

* Ἐβαπτισεν εν ὑδατι. Acts i. 5. John traces an analogy between his baptism, and that of the Spirit. "I indeed baptize you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Matt. iii. 11. If the word baptize may be translated *immerse* in the former part of this sentence, doubtless it may in the latter part. But what translator would be satisfied to say, "He shall *immerse* you in the Holy Ghost and in fire?"

† Not a few of the ancients entertained the opinion that John baptized by pouring. After this manner, Aurelius Prudentius, who wrote A. D. 390, represents him as baptizing "*Perfundit fluvio*," &c.—A few years later, Paulinus, bishop of Nola, says, "He (John Baptist) washes away the sins of believers (infusis lymphis) by the *pouring* of water.—Numerous ancient pictures represent *Christ* as having been baptized by *pouring*.—Bernard speaks of John as having baptized his Lord after this manner. "*Infundit*

The baptism of the three thousand next claims attention. The Scriptures furnish not an incident that would lead to the conclusion that this multitude were immersed. Many circumstances, on the contrary, seem to indicate that some other mode must have been adopted. The occasion was sudden; the multitude were principally strangers, who had made no previous preparation for a change of garments; they were in Jerusalem, several miles from Jordon and Enon; no public baths had been engaged, or could be, as the rulers were violently opposed to the Christians; no mention is made of their leaving the place, not even the *house*, where they were assembled; and above all, *the time was short*. The Apostles came together at the third hour, or nine o'clock. Besides the discourse, of which we have an epitome in the acts, it is said they "testified and exhorted with *many other words*." Three thousand were awakened, convinced, converted, professed their faith in Christ, and concluded to be baptized. These various important transactions must have occupied at least four hours. Five hours of the day now remained, and three thousand were to be baptized by twelve men. Could they be immersed? The circumstances of the case, as it seems to me, plainly forbid the supposition. Besides, they had all just been baptized by the *pouring out* of the Holy Spirit. They had received spiritual baptism, the *thing signified*, under the similitude of *pouring*. How natural to suppose that they received water baptism, *the sign*, in the same way?

I know it is said, that it is not recorded that the three thousand were *baptized* the same day, but only that they were *added to the number of the disciples*. But it *is* re-

aquam capiti Creatoris creatura. See Walker's Doctrine of Baptisms, Chap. 10. Lightfoot says, "As it is beyond a doubt that John took those whom he baptized into the river, so it is scarcely less certain that he there *sprinkled them* with water." Com. on Luke iii. 16.

corded that "they who *gladly received the word* were baptized;" and I would inquire whether any were added to the number of the disciples who did not gladly receive the word?"

It is also said, that the whole hundred and twenty disciples might have been employed in baptizing on this great occasion. But it remains to be proved, that the whole of this number, females as well as males, were officially qualified to administer baptism.

On the whole, I cannot entertain a doubt that the three thousand were baptized by the Apostles the same day they believed, and that the ordinance was administered by *pouring* or *sprinkling*.*

The baptism of the eunuch is usually cited in proof of immersion. And suppose it be admitted that the eunuch was immersed. This would be only admitting that immersion is baptism, a point which we have never called in question. I see no great reason, however, to suppose that the eunuch was immersed. No circumstance indicates it, except its being said that both he and Philip went down into, or (εις) *to* the water, and afterwards came up out of, or (εκ) *from* it; and this they might and probably would have done, had the eunuch been sprinkled.

In the baptism of Paul, nothing looks like immersion, but every circumstance appears against it. He had been three days in Damascus "without sight, and neither ate nor drank." Acts ix. 10. Ananias comes in and salutes him as a Christian brother. Immediately he rises up, and is baptized. And after baptism, "when he had re-

* In this opinion I am happy to concur with many ancient and learned writers. Zanchy, in his "Cultu Dei Externo," Lib. i. says, "The three thousand were baptized, non alia ratione quam *aspersione aquæ*." Lynwood, and Bonaventure, and Nicolaus de Orbellis, and Chamier, and many others, say the same.

ceived meat, he was strengthened." He does not repair to a river, or bath, or so much as leave the house. Indeed, in his weak state, it is hardly probable that he was able to leave it. With the precise mode of Paul's baptism I pretend not to be acquainted; but I do think it in the highest degree improbable that he was immersed.

The instance of Cornelius and his family is equally convincing. They believed on the preaching of Peter; the Holy Ghost fell on them; and the astonished Apostle, perceiving the event, exclaimed, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Acts x. 47. "*Can any man forbid water*—that is, *that it should be brought?* "Is not this the most natural and obvious meaning—an idea which the form of words and mode of expression instantly and fully excite in the mind? Accordingly, there is no hint of their going abroad, or of any other preparation being made in order to baptism, than that of bringing water into the room. The history leads us to believe, that they were baptized at the very juncture when Peter commanded it, and in the very apartment where they were at the time assembled." They had just received the *thing signified* in baptism, by the *descent* of the Holy Spirit upon them; and in all probability they received the *external sign* by the pouring or sprinkling of water.

The circumstances of the jailer's baptism prove as conclusively as evidence of this nature will admit, that he and his family were not immersed. They were baptized at home, at midnight, at the same hour in which they believed. Acts xvi. 33. We have much reason to suppose that, during the whole transaction, Paul and Silas never left the prison. They would not leave it the following day, till those who had unjustly apprehended and beaten them came and honorably brought them out. Is it like-

ly, then, that they left it in a clandestine manner the night before, regardless of the strict charge which the jailer had received to keep them safely, and this, too, at a moment when every one was awake, and the whole city had just been roused and terrified with an earthquake? Is it likely that, under these circumstances, and in their bruised and distressed condition, they went abroad, and into the water, for the purpose of immersion? To me, I must acknowledge, the thing appears altogether incredible.

The circumstances of some of the principal instances of baptism recorded in the New Testament—those calculated to afford light in regard to the mode of administration, have now been examined; and the reader must judge whether they do not satisfactorily indicate some other mode besides immersion.

5. Immersion was never considered as *essential* to baptism, till subsequent to the reformation in the sixteenth century.—That immersions have been frequent in the Christian church, and that they have been more generally practised at some periods, than they now are among the Pedobaptists of this country, or than they were in the days of the Apostles, I see no reason to doubt. There is a disposition in men to *overdo* in the externals of religion, while they *underdo*, and perhaps do little or nothing, in things more essential. The Pharisees, not satisfied with the yoke of the ceremonial law, must add to it "the tradition of the elders." Peter, not satisfied with that degree of washing which his Master judged to be sufficient, said, "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." And Christians, in some past ages, not satisfied to be baptized by pouring, washing, or sprinkling, which is as much, I think, as the Saviour requires, must be plunged completely under water. Indeed, at some periods they have not been satisfied even with this. They must be

immersed three times. They must be immersed naked. They must have water applied to the face, and be marked with a cross, and anointed with oil, subsequent to immersion. They must be robed in white, a certain number of days after baptism, in token of their purity.* I mention these facts to show the propensity there is in man to be superstitious, and to attempt more than is needful in the externals of religion. It is owing to this propensity, that immersions have at some periods more generally prevailed, than it can be made to appear they did under the ministry of the Apostles.

I propose it, however, as an indubitable fact, that immersion never was considered as *essential* to baptism, till the rise of the Anabaptists (as they were then called) in the sixteenth century. I say *essential;* for this, it will be recollected, is the point at issue.

The case of the *clinics*, so often referred to, is proof conclusive that immersion was not deemed essential in the primitive church. The *clinics* (so called from the Greek κλινη) were those who were baptized in sickness; and it is admitted on all hands that they were baptized by *pouring* or *sprinkling*. It is admitted, too, that, in case of recovery, they were not re-baptized. The conclusion is inevitable, that pouring or sprinkling was regarded, in the primitive church, as valid baptism; and of course that immersion was not considered essential.

It has been objected, indeed, that the clinics were canonically prohibited the priesthood. But *why* were they prohibited? Not because of the informality of their baptism; but because their *sincerity* had not been sufficiently tested. Baptism, at that period, exposed persons to the most dreadful persecutions, especially if they undertook the work of the ministry. If, therefore, any person

* See Witsius' Econ. of Cov. Vol. iii. p. 394, and Vossii Disput. i. de Bap. th. 9.

neglected baptism until visited with sickness, this neglect rendered his character liable to suspicion. Accordingly, the council of Neocesarea decreed, A. D. 313, as follows:—"He who is baptized when sick ought not to be made a priest, unless his diligence and fidelity do afterwards prove commendable, or the scarcity of men fit for the office require it; *for his coming to the faith is not voluntary, but from necessity.*"

It was made a question by Magnus to Cyprian, about the middle of the third century, "whether they are to be esteemed right Christians who have been only sprinkled with water, and not washed or dipped."* In reply, Cyprian thus writes:—"I would use so much modesty and humility, as not to prescribe so positively, but that every one should have the freedom of his own thoughts, and do as he thinks best. For the contagion of sin is not, in the sacrament of salvation, washed off by the same means as the dirt of the skin and of the body is washed away. There is no necessity of soap, or of a large pool, or fish pond. It is in another way that the breast of the believer is washed; after another manner that the mind of man is by faith cleansed. In the saving sacraments, when necessity obliges, and God grants his indulgence, the shortest ways of transacting divine matters confers the whole on believers. Neither ought any one to be disturbed because the sick are baptized by sprinkling or washing; since they obtain the favor of the Lord." Cyprian here quotes the language of the prophet, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," and adds, "*From hence it appears that the sprinkling of water is of equal validity with the laver of salvation.*†

* There was no question, it seems, at this time, as to the validity of *washing;* and why should *sprinkling* have come in question, if this mode of baptism were not in use?

† Opera Cyp. Lib. ii. Epis. 7.

Dr. Cave says, the primitive Christians "did not hold sprinkling to be unlawful, especially in cases of necessity, of weakness, danger of death, or where conveniency of immerging could not be had." He further says, that they thought the martyrs "sufficiently qualified for heaven, by being baptized in their own blood."*

Mr. Walker tells us of a Jew who, while travelling with Christians in the time of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, about sixty or seventy years after the Apostles, was converted, fell sick, and desired baptism. Not having water, "they sprinkled him thrice with sand, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He recovered, and his case was reported to the Bishop, who decided that the man was baptized (si modo aqua denuo' perfunderetur) if he only had water *poured* on him again."† I mention this case, not as approving of baptism without water, but to show how far the primitive Christians were from considering immersion as essential.

Irenæus mentions a sect of Christians who baptized "by an *affusion* of water mixed with oil."‡

Athanasius represents the Arians as administering baptism (ραντιζομενον) by *sprinkling*. He does not censure the mode, but blames them for their violent proceedings, and for attaching a different meaning to the words used in baptism, from that given them by the church.‖

Theodoret relates that the Eunomians, in baptism, wet themselves only to the breast.§

Lawrence baptized two persons, Romanus and Lucillus, by *affusion*. "A little while before he suffered," he also "baptized, with a pitcher of water, one of his executioners."¶

* Primitive Christianity, Part i. Chap. 10. pp. 300, 321.
† Doctrine of Baptisms, Chap. 10.
‡ Advers Hæres. Lib. i. Cap. 23.
‖ Orat. iii. against the Arians. § Hær. Fab. Lib. iv.
¶ Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. Part ii. pp. 353, 356.

Novatian became a Christian about 120 years after the apostles; and "when visited with sickness, baptism was administered to him, according to the custom of those times, by *affusion* or sprinkling."*

Basilides is mentioned by Eusebius as having been baptized in prison.*

Constantine the Great, "being clothed with a white garment, and laid upon his bed, was baptized in a solemn manner by Eusebius of Nicomedia."†

Jerome speaks of a mode of baptism as common in the ancient church, which was not to dip the whole body, but (in lavacro ter mergitare caput) *a thrice dipping of the head.*‡ Augustine, as quoted by Gratian, mentions the same. "After that you have promised to believe, (tertio capita vestra in sacro fonte demersimus) thrice we dip your head in the sacred font."||

In the year 390, Aurelius Prudentius, a man of Consular dignity, a Christian and a poet, thus sings in one of his evening hymns: "Worshipper of God, remember that thou didst go under the (Rorem sanctum) the holy dews of the font and laver;"—in other words that thou wast *sprinkled* in baptism."§

The Centuriators (quoting from Socrates. Lib. vii. Cap. 17.) tell us of a celebrated Font, "out of which (baptizato equa superfusa) the water *is poured from above* on the baptized person." They also speak of a hypocritical Jew, who had offered himself for baptism in different places for mercenary purposes, but "when he came to this font, and there offered to be baptized, and held his head over the font, the water vanished away once and again; whereupon his fraud was discovered."

* Euseb. Ecc. Hist. Lib. vi. Cap. 5 and 43.
† Dupin's Ecc. Hist. Vol. ii. p. 84.
‡ Advers. Luciferian.
|| See Gratian de Consecrat. Dist. 4.
§ In Walker's doctrine of Baptisms, Chap. 10.

Gennadius of Marseilles, who flourished about the year 490, says, "The person to be baptized makes confession of his faith before the priest; and after confession, he is (vel aspergitur vel intingitur) either *sprinkled with water*, or dipped in it."*

Fabian tells us that Augustine, the first missionary to England, baptized ten thousand persons in a river, near York, on a Christmas day.† He certainly could not have baptized them by immersion.

In the year 499, Clodovæus king of the Franks was baptized by Remigius, Arch-bishop of Rheims, not by immersion, but (per infusionem aquae) by the pouring of water.†

Bede frequently uses the terms tingo, abluo, perfundo aqua, in relation to baptism; and represents one Heribaldus speaking of himself as baptized in this way. "Unda perfusus sum," &c.‡

Stephen II., Bishop of Rome, decreed, A. D. 753, that *pouring* should be considered as valid baptism.||

Walafridus Strabo, who flourished about the year 850, says, "Many have been baptized, not only by immersion, but also (desuper fundendo) by pouring water on them from above; and they may still be so baptized."§

In the year 858, Nicetas Serronius speaks of those (qui purifica aqua perfusi sunt) have been baptized *by pouring*.¶

Liudgerus is said by Mabillon to have "baptized a little infant, by *pouring on* holy water." **

* De Dogmat. Ecc. Cap. 74.

† In Walker's Doctrine of Baptisms, Chap. 10, 13.

‡ Ecc. Hist. Lib. v. Cap. 6. Baronius in his Annals (An. Chr. 826) speaks of the baptism of this Heribaldus, king of the Danes, in St. Alban's Church at Mentz, "by having the water of holy baptism *poured upon him*."

|| Concilia Labbei, Tom. vi. p. 1650.

§ De Rebus Ecc. Cap. xxvi. p. 415.

¶ Comment. on Greg. Naz. Orat. 40.

** Acta Sanctorum P. ii. Cap. 7.

"Estius, referring to times long before the year 1300, witnesseth that pouring had been much in use."*

Bernard, A. D. 1120, speaks of baptism as administered by *pouring* (corpus perfusum visibili elemento.)†

Otho, Bishop of Bamberg, a cotemporary of Bernard, prescribes that baptism be administered in his diocese, not by immersing the whole body, but (trina immersione capitis) by a trine immersion of the head.‡

In the year 1140, Gratian speaks of baptism as administered by *sprinkling*. "The blessed waters with which men (asperguntur) *are sprinkled*, avails to their sanctification."‖

Hego, A. D. 1245, says, "If there cannot be had a sufficiency of water for the infant to be wholly dipped in it, let the baptizer *pour* some water upon the infant and say, *I baptize thee*, &c.§

About the year 1255, Thomas Aquinas discusses the question, whether immersion be of the necessity of baptism, and answers it in the negative; for, says he, "as a washing with water may be made, not only by immersion, but also by aspersion or affusion, so a baptism may be made by way of *sprinkling* or *pouring on water*."¶

A few years later, Bonaventure discusses the same question, (an immergendus, vel tantummodo aspergendus sit baptizandus) and answers it in the same way. "It is to be presumed, says he, "that the apostles baptized by *sprinkling*; which way is still kept in many churches, but mostly in the Gallican."¶

Durant, A. D. 1280, says, "sometimes baptism is given by immersion, so that the whole child is dipped in water;

* In P. Clark's Scrip. Grounds of In. Bap. pp. 128, 129.
† Epis. 77. ‡ In Walker's Doc. of Baptisms, Chap. 10.
‖ De Consecrat. Dist. 4. § Magdeberg, Hist. Cent. xiii. Col. 596.
¶ In Walker's Doc. of Baptisms, Chap. 10.

and sometimes it is given by aspersion, when the child is *sprinkled,* or water is *poured upon it.*"*

About the same time, "the Synod of Angiers speaks of dipping or pouring as used indifferently in baptism."†

Angelus Clavasius says, (A. D. 1480.) "The infant, in what way soever he be touched" (with water) "is baptized. A sprinkling, how little soever it be, is sufficient in case of necessity."‡

Erasmus says, "With us," (the Dutch) "they have the water *poured* on them in baptism; in England they are dipped."‖

Martin Bucer, about the year 1520, says, "God commanded unto men such a rite, as that either by the intinction, ablution, or sprinkling of water, they should receive remission of sins."§

Sebastian, Arch-bishop of Mentz directs (A. D. 1551,) "that the priest, holding the child over the font in his left hand, shall take water out of the font with his right hand and pour it upon the head of the child three times."

The form of baptism among the English Exiles in the reign of Queen Mary, was for the minister to "take water in his hand, lay it on the child's forehead, and say, *I baptize thee,*" &c.¶

Walæus says, "It hath always been held indifferent in the Christian church, whether baptism were administered by a single or a trine immersion, or whether immersion or sprinkling were used."**

Chemnitius says, "Whether the washing be performed by mersion, tinction, perfusion, or sprinkling, it is a baptizing."††

* De Ritu Baptizandi, Cap. 2.
† In Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. P. ii. Chap. 9.
‡ In Walker's Doctrine of Baptisms, Chap. 10.
‖ In Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. Part ii. Chap. 9.
§ Com. on Epis. to the Rom. Chap. vi. ¶ Book of Forms.
** Synopsis Theol. Disput. 44. †† Exam. Concil. Trident. P. ii. p. 122.

Danæus says, "At this day, they who are to be baptized are mostly *sprinkled* only with water, and not dipped into it."*

Calvin tells us that, "The substance of baptism being retained, the church, from the beginning, enjoyed a liberty of using somewhat differant rites."†

Zelenus says, "Dipping was formerly more used, especially in the hot countries of Judea; but this mode was not universally practised, or essential to the ordinance of baptism."†

Zanchius says, "As in a matter of liberty and indifferency, the church sometimes followed one ceremony, and sometimes the other, as she judged most expedient."‡

Dr. Wall, who had a partiality for immersion, says, "On extraordinary occasions, baptism, by affusion of water on the face, was by the ancients counted sufficient baptism. Of this there are *many proofs*."‖

The author of Letters to Bishop Hoadly, a learned and professed Baptist, admits that, "for thirteen hundred years successively after the apostles, *sprinkling* was permitted upon extraordinary occasions."§

Mr. Robinson, also a learned Baptist, admits that, "before the reformation, *sprinkling was held valid*, in cases of necessity."¶

In view of the foregoing authorities, the public will be able to form a judgment as to the opinions and practices which, in different ages, have prevailed in relation to baptism. That immersion is baptism, I do not doubt; and

* Isagoge Christiana P. iv. Cap. 29, p. 522.

† In Reed's Apology pp. 240, 113.

‡ In P. Clark's Scrip. Grounds of In. Bap. p. 128.

‖ Hist. of In. Pap. Part. ii. Chap. 9. § Plain Account, &c. p. 16.

¶ Hist. of Baptism, p. 116. This necessity is defined by Lyndwood, who wrote An. 1420, to be "danger of death; a state of hostility; an incursion of thieves; an obstruction of the road; a legal disability," &c. Provinciale, Lib. iii. tit. 25.

that this mode of baptizing, at some periods and in some places, has been more common than any other, I see no reason to deny. But until the rise of the Anabaptists (as they were called) in the sixteenth century, I find no account of any church, or sect of Christians, which held that immersion was *essential* to the ordinance. Some seem to have practised this mode (connected with various idle ceremonies) uniformly, except in cases of necessity; others immersed less frequently, but generally; others still, baptized indifferently, by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling, according to circumstances; while all agreed that immersion was not essential, but that baptism in other modes was equally valid.

To the arguments adduced in the foregoing pages I know of but one objection of any importance, which has not been noticed. The Greeks, it is said, understand their native language better than foreigners, and in their church baptism is uniformly administered by immersion. To this I reply,

1. That while it is likely the modern Greek may understand his *native* language better, in some respects, than foreigners, it is not likely that he better understands the meaning of βαπτιζω, as used by *ancient* Greek authors, and by the writers of the New Testament. But,

2. The Greeks do not consider immersion as *essential* to baptism. This is evident from the fact that, although they ordinarily baptize in this way, still when sickness or other circumstances occur to prevent, they administer the ordinance in other modes.* Of course they must regard immersion as *not essential;* and this is all for which Pedobaptists contend.

* Dr. Wall tells us, that the Greeks "hardly count a child, except in case of sickness, well baptized without immersion;" which implies that, in cases sickness, if not in others, they do count their children *well baptized* although they have not been immersed.

PART II.

ON THE SUBJECTS OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

There is a difference of opinion between Baptists and Pedobaptists respecting, not only the mode, but the *subjects* of Christian baptism; and in entering on the discussion before us, it is important that the precise point of difference should be stated. It is not, whether unbaptized adults, *who give no evidence of faith*, are proper subjects of the ordinance. We agree with our brethren that they are not. Hence, we agree with them in admitting the full force of those precepts which enjoin repentance and faith on adults in order to baptism. Neither is it the question, whether those unbaptized adults, *who give evidence of faith*, are proper subjects. We agree with our brethren that they are. The sole point of difference between us and them, in respect to the proper subjects of baptism, is this:—*We affirm, and they deny, that children, who are under the care of believing, covenanting parents should be baptized.**

To establish and defend what is here affirmed will be my object in the following Sections. It will be necessary, in some of the first of them, to attend to subjects which have an *indirect* though *important* bearing on the point under consideration.

* It will be said, perhaps, that we differ from Baptists in another important point:—*They affirming and we denying that believers who have been baptized in infancy should be re-baptized.* But as they affirm this, because they think infant baptism wrong; and we deny it, because we think infant baptism right; the difference obviously respects INFANT BAPTISM ONLY; and the question is left as before stated.

Section I.

The Visible Church the same under both Dispensations.

"My Dove, my undefiled is but *one;* she is the only one of her Mother."—Cant. vi. 9.

The relation subsisting in ancient times between the congregation of Israel and the Divine Being was very intimate and peculiar. They had entered into solemn covenant with him, and he with them. They had 'avouched the Lord to be their God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken to his voice; and the Lord had avouched them to be his peculiar people, as he had promised them.' Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. Accordingly, God speaks of the Israelites throughout the Old Testament as *his* people, *his own* people; and they speak of him as in a peculiar sense *their God.* They were the depositaries of the true religion; had made profession of this religion; and were manifestly *a church*—a *visible* church. They are spoken of as a church in the New Testament. "This (Moses) is he who was in the (εκκλεσια) *church* in the wilderness." Acts vii. 38.

It will be my object here to show, that the visible church, under both dispensations, has been *substantially the same;* or that the general, visible, Christian community is but a continuation and enlargement of 'the commonwealth of Israel.'

I do not mean, indeed, that there have been no changes: there certainly have been changes, in accommodation to the altered state of things. While the people of God were looking forward to a *promised* Saviour, they needed types, and rites, and bloody sacrifices which, since his appearance, have, for the best reasons, been taken out of the way. Still, the abolishing of these rites, and the

ushering in of the new dispensation, did not affect the identity of the church.*

1. The identity of the visible church under both dispensations may be argued from *the identity of the real church.*—The real church on earth comprises all the true friends of God existing in the world. It embodies all the true religion, the piety, which is to be found among men. It is admitted, that *this body* has been, at all periods, the same. The true friends of God have always sustained the same spiritual relations to him, and to one another;—they have always belonged to the same holy family, and this family is the church. But if the *real* church has been, in all periods, the same, so has the *visible* church. What is the visible church? It consists of those who, by a credible profession, *appear* to belong to the real church —*appear* to be truly sanctified persons. It is nothing more than the real church *bodied forth, made visible* to the apprehension of men;—so that we can no more conceive of two distinct visible churches, while we admit the identity of the real church, than we can conceive of any thing else as *visibly two*, which yet *appears* to be one and the same.

2. Under both dispensations, the church has *professed the same religion.*—No one doubts that true religion has been in all periods the same.

There has been but one path from earth to heaven—but one way of salvation by a Redeemer. This religion is revealed and inculcated in the Bible; and the religion of the Bible is *one*. The religion of the Old Testament is not distinct from that of the New, like the religion of

* John the Baptist and our Saviour preached, "Repent ye, for *the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" Matt. iii. 2, and iv. 17. The phrase, *kingdom of heaven*, is used by the Evangelists in a variety of significations. In the places referred to, it imports, not a new visible church, but the *gospel dispensation*, which was about to be introduced, and to displace the dispensation of the law.

Brumha or Mahomet;—in all essential points it is *the same*. But the Israelites were professors of this religion as truly as Christians are. The Old Testament was committed to them, and they professed to receive and follow it. Both the Old Testament and the New are committed to us, and we profess to make them the rule of our faith and practice. It follows, therefore, that the church, under both dispensations, has *professed the same religion*—the religion of the Bible.

This argument may be presented in a somewhat different light.—The religion of the Bible consists essentially in its *doctrines;* and what doctrines are now professed in the church, which were not professed in the church of Israel? What important doctrines are taught in the New Testament, which are omitted in the Old? In the New Testament, to be sure, the doctrines of religion are set forth with greater clearness, particularity, and force, but it would be difficult to show, except in matters of inferior importance, that it contains any new truths.

Another essential part of the religion of the Bible is its *requisitions;* and in these there is a striking uniformity.—The demands of the *law* have been the same under both dispensations. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."—The demands of the *gospel*, too, have been the same. Repentance, faith, submission, hope, all the holy affections towards God, and all the benevolence and kindness to man, which are required of Christians now, were as strictly required of Israelites under the former dispensation.—Indeed, those directions which go to constitute the *discipline of the church*, are inculcated in the New Testament almost precisely as in the Old. The direction of Christ now is, "If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault." Formerly it was, "Thou

shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." Lev. xix. 17. The direction now is, "If thy brother repent, forgive him." Formerly it was, 'When the offender shall bring his sin offering, and in token of repentance lay his hand upon its head, the victim shall be slain, and he shall be forgiven.' Lev. Chap. iv. The direction now is, 'If the offender will not hear the church, but continues obstinate, let him be cut off and become to you as an heathen.' Formerly it was, 'The soul that doeth aught presumptuously, and will not hearken to the priest, nor the judge, the same hath reproached the Lord, and that soul shall be cut off from his people.'*

Still another part of the religion of the Bible is its *promises;* and what better promises has the church under the present dispensation, than those which it formerly enjoyed? Indeed, are not the identical promises to *the ancient Zion* still relied on as valid, and as applicable to the existing church of Christ? "Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers. They shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." Is. xlix. 16, 23.

It is plain, I trust, to every reader, that the religion of the two Testaments is the same; and that the church, under both dispensations, has actually professed the same religion. Of course, in regard to its outward religious profession—its *visibility*, it has been the same church.

3. Numerous declarations, which in the Old Testament were made to the ancient church, are in the New Testament applied to the Christian church. For in-

* Compare Matt. xviii. 17, and Numb. xv, 30, and Deut. xvii. 12.

stance, it is said in the Psalms, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation (εκκλησιας Sept.) I will praise thee." Ps. xxii. 22. But in the New Testament we learn, that this is a declaration of *Christ*, made in reference to *his church*. "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he (*Christ*) is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church (εκκλησιας) will I sing praise unto thee." Heb. ii. 11, 12. It follows, that "the *congregation*," spoken of in the Psalms, and "the *church*" spoken of in this latter passage, are the same body.

God said of his ancient church, "I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." Lev. xxvi. 12. The Apostle quotes this language, together with other expressions from the Old Testament, and applies them to the church at Corinth. "As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people; and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. *Having, therefore, these promises, let us cleanse ourselves*," &c. 2 Cor. vi. 16—18. How could Paul represent the Corinthian brethren as *having these promises*, and as being under consequent obligations to cleanse themselves, unless he considered them as belonging to the *same church* to which these promises were originally made?

In the following language, God addressed his church under the former dispensation: "If ye will obey my voice and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." Ex. xix. 5, 6. In almost the same language, he addresses his church under the Christian dispensation; "Ye are a chosen

generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." 1 Pet. ii. 9.

4. The *prophecies* of Scripture clearly show, that the present visible church is the same with the church of Israel.

John the Baptist predicted of him who was to come after him, not that he should *destroy*, but that he should "*thoroughly purge* his floor." Matt. iii. 12. Accordingly, the church was purified, but not destroyed, at the introduction of the Christian dispensation.*

Christ predicted that many should "come from the east, and from the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven," while "the children of the kingdom should be cast out into outer darkness." Matt. viii. 11, 12. What are we to understand here by the phrase, "kingdom of heaven?" Not the kingdom of glory, surely; for none of the children of that kingdom will ever be cast out. The phrase must denote in this place, as it does in others, the *visible church*. And the prediction of our Saviour was, that when the Jews were ejected for their unbelief, the Gentiles should come and sit down in the *same church* "with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

In the parable of the vineyard, Christ also predicted, that the *same* vineyard or church, in which the Jews had done so wickedly, should be taken from them and given to the Gentiles. "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. xxi. 43.

In proof of the point under consideration, I might ad-

* The introduction of the new dispensation is spoken of in the Epistle to the Hebrews as "the time of (διωρθωσεως) *reformation*" or *emendation*. Chap. ix. 10. On the theory here opposed, it must have been to the ancient church a time, not of *reformation*, but *destruction*. Reformation necessarily implies a *continuance* of the thing reformed.

duce numerous quotations from the Old Testament. Indeed, all the ancient predictions of the ingathering of the Gentiles, and of the future prosperity and glory of the church, were made, not to a *new church* to be established under the gospel, but to the *Zion of the Old Testament*, the church at that time existing in Israel.* "The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee. Thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see and flow together, and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee; the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all them that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, *the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.*" Is. Chap. ix.

There is no resisting the conclusion to be drawn from these and similar passages, many of which might be quoted from the Old Testament, but by supposing that it is the *real*, and not the *visible* church, which is here addressed. But how will those who adopt this hypothesis interpret predictions like the following? "The children which thou shalt have, *after thou hast lost the other*, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me; give place to me that I may dwell. Then thou shalt say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing *I have lost my children*, and am desolate, a captive, removing to and fro?" Is. xlix. 20, 21. Will it be pretended that *this* prediction belongs to the *real*, as distinct from

* See Appendix, Note C.

the *visible* church of God? Has the *real* church ever lost any of her children? Has any true believer ever fallen finally away?—It cannot be denied that this and similar predictions relate to the *visible church in Israel*, and establish the fact that converted Gentiles under the new dispensation are gathered into the same church.

5. The identity of the church under both dispensations is certain from *the declarations* of Scripture.—The Apostle Paul teaches (Rom. xi. 17—24.) that believing Gentiles are graffed into *the same* olive tree, from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off, and into which the restored Jews shall be graffed again. What are we to understand by this olive tree? Not Christ: for none who are truly interested in him are ever broken off. Not the *real, spiritual* church; for the same reason. The olive tree plainly represents the *visible* church, the branches of which are attached to it by a *profession* of godliness.* From this, the unbelieving Jews were broken off. Into the same, the believing Gentiles are graffed. And into the same, the restored posterity of Abraham will at length be graffed again. Hence, the sameness of the church, under both dispensations, is in this Chapter incontestably established.†

* Jeremiah, addressing the church, says, "The Lord called thy name a green *olive tree*." Chap xi. 16. Of the church in Israel the prophet Hosea says, "His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as *the olive tree*." Chap. xiv. 6.

† "The (αγριελαιος) *wild olive*," says Professor Stuart, was often grafted into the fruitful one, when it began to decay, and thus not only brought forth fruit, but caused the decaying olive to revive and flourish. The image which the Apostle here employs is, therefore, a very vivid one. *The Gentiles had been grafted in upon the Jewish church, and had caused this decayed tree to revive and flourish.* But still the Apostle means to hold in check any exultation of the Gentiles on account of this. He reminds them, that after all they are not the stock, but only grafts; that the root and fatness of the good olive have been transferred to them, only because they have been grafted into it.—All this shows that, in the Apostle's view,

In further proof of this point, I shall adduce but one passage more. The Apostle, addressing his Ephesian brethren, says, "Wherefore remember, that ye, being in time past Gentiles in the flesh ..... were without Christ, being aliens from *the commonwealth of Israel*, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Eph. ii. 11, 12. Does the form of expression here used necessarily imply, that the Ephesian brethren were *no longer* "without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world?" But it equally implies, that they were *no longer* "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." It is just as plain from this passage, that these Christians were now *members* of the commonwealth or church of Israel, as it is that they belonged to Christ, enjoyed the comforts of hope, or loved and served the God of heaven.

6. There is evidence from *fact*, that the church, under both dispensations, is the same. During Christ's public ministry, his disciples were members of the *Jewish Church*. They attended the festivals and other instituted services of that church, and "walked in all its commandments and ordinances blameless." After the ascension of Christ, we find them pillars in the *Christian church*. Had they, in the mean time, been cut off from one church and gathered into another? And if so, when and how was this done? And what record have we, in the New Testament, of any such proceeding?—In the hour of Christ's death, important changes were indeed accomplished. The old dispensation was abolished, the new one ushered in, and the church was purged of its unbelieving members; but the stock of the olive tree, with

there has been, in reality, *but one church*; the ancient Jewish one being the foundation, the Christian one the superstructure and completion of the building." Comment. on Rom. xi. 17.

its few green branches, remained the same, and into it multitudes were speedily engrafted.

In short, nothing can be more evident, than that the disciples belonged to the same church, on the day of Pentecost and afterwards, to which they belonged on the night when they partook of *the Passover*—a sacrament of the old dispensation—with their blessed Lord. And from this *fact*, it follows conclusively, that the church, under both dispensations, has been the same.

Section II.

The Covenant of the Visible Church the same under both dispensations.

That the covenant of the visible church has been the same under both dispensations is an incontestable inference from the truth established in the previous section. The church is constituted by its covenant; and the connexion between church and covenant is of such a nature, that if the one is essentially changed, the other must be; or if one can be shown to remain unchanged, the same must be true respecting the other. But it has been proved that the *church* continues the same. It may be safely concluded, therefore, that the *covenant* of the church is essentially the same.

What was the covenant of the church of Israel? Not the Sinatic covenant; for God had promised to be *the God* of Israel, and when speaking of them, uniformly calls them *his people*, long previous to the promulgation of the covenant from Sinai.* The covenant of the ancient church was unquestionably *the covenant with Abraham.* Here, God first promises to be the God of Abraham and his seed. Immediately after the giving of this covenant, God begins to designate the family of Abraham as *his*

* See Exodus iii. 6, 7

people. And in subsequent Scripture, when speaking of them as his people, he usually annexes some express reference to his covenant dealings with Abraham.*

That the covenant with Abraham was the covenant of the church of Israel, is evident from the Mosaic institutions themselves. The design of these institutions was, not to separate a people with whom God had no previous covenant relation, and form them into a church, but to *establish* Israel to be *his people*, and that he might be *their God*, as he had "sworn unto their fathers, *to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.*" Deut. xxix. 13. Since, then, the covenant with Abraham was the covenant of the ancient visible church; and since the church has been, under both dispensations, the same; it follows that the covenant with Abraham must now be the covenant of the visible Christian church.†

That the covenant with Abraham still exists, as the covenant of the church, may be shown from other considerations.

1. It still exists, because *it has never been abolished.* As God established this covenant, and gave it to his

* "Blessed be the *Lord God of Israel;* for he hath visited and redeemed *his people* . . . . . to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his *holy covenant;* the oath which he sware to *our father Abraham,*" &c. Luke i. 68—73.

† Some Pedobaptists have considered this covenant as *the covenant of Grace*; but I prefer to speak of it as *the covenant of the church.* The covenant of grace is strictly this, 'Repent, and ye shall be forgiven; believe, and ye shall be saved;' and all who enter into it are of course, pious persons. It is believed that the covenant of the church, under both dispensations, *comprises* the covenant of grace; but it also comprises certain other things, to denote its visibility. Many have lived and died in the covenant of grace who have not entered into the covenant of the visible church; and more, probably, under both dispensations, have entered *professedly* into the covenant of the church, who have had no interest in the covenant of grace.—I make these remarks, for the purpose of distinguishing between these covenants, and to show the propriety of considering the covenant with Abraham as *the covenant of the church.*

church, it must continue till it is abolished by the same authority. Where, then, is the evidence that God has abolished his covenant with Abraham? Suffice it to say that there is no such evidence in the Bible.

It has been said, indeed, that in the change of the dispensations—the removal of the Levitical law—the covenant with Abraham was doubtless abolished. But Paul, it seems, judged differently. He assures us that the covenant with Abraham, "which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, *cannot disannul*, that it should make the promise of none effect." Gal. iii. 17.

It has been said, too, that the removal of circumcision, the ancient token of the covenant with Abraham, affords evidence of the abolition of the covenant itself. But a visible token is no essential part of a covenant. Mutual engagements may be binding without any token. Consequently, God may have removed the ancient token of his covenant, or may have exchanged it for another of similar import, and still the covenant remain the same as before.

2. That the covenant with Abraham is still the covenant of the church, is evident from its *promises* and *requirements*, or from its very *nature*. Every literal covenant consists essentially in promises and requirements. If, therefore, the covenant with Abraham shall be found to present the same general promises and requisitions which are held forth to believers under the gospel, the conclusion cannot be avoided, that this is still the covenant of the church.

The covenant with Abraham, like the gospel, exhibits *a Saviour* as the grand object of faith. "In thy seed" (which is Christ) "shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. xii. 3, and xxii. 18. This covenant contains promises of all needful *temporal blessings*, Gen. xvii.

8: and promises of the like description are found in the gospel. Matt. vi. 33. 1 Tim. iv. 8. Here are promises of great prosperity to the church, Gen. xvii. 2; and such promises are repeated throughout the Bible. Here, too, are promises, in which Abraham saw his title to heaven, Gen. xvii. 8, and Heb. xi. 10; and the same precious promises are still good to believers. In this covenant are promises of distinguished honor for the seed of Abraham, Gen. xvii. 6; and his spiritual seed find such promises in the New Testament. In short, God here promises to be a God to his people and their children after them, Gen. xvii. 7; and a greater promise never has been made, nor can be, in this or in the coming world. Heb. viii 10. Rev. xxi. 7.*

Let us now look at the *requirements* of the covenant under consideration. In promising to be the God of Abraham, God virtually required Abraham to accept of him as his God and portion. In holding up the Messiah as an object of faith, he required him to believe in the promised Messiah. In requiring circumcision, he required that of which circumcision was an emblem, viz. a renewal of the heart to holiness. And he expressly required Abraham to walk before him and be perfect. Gen. xvii. 1. Has God ever ceased to make these requirements? Or will he cease to make them to the end of the world?—We see, then, from the promises and requirements of the covenant with Abraham, or from its very *nature*, that it still exists as the covenant of the church.

Among the promises of the covenant with Abraham, I have included the memorable promise, first recorded in the twelfth Chapter of Genesis, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." It is admitted by the more

* In the interpretation above given to the covenant with Abraham, I am fully supported by Mr Carson, a late distinguished Baptist writer on the subject. For his statements at length, see Appendix, Note D.

intelligent Baptists, that this is a "gospel promise," and "the ever memorable charter of all the blessings which Jewish and Gentile believers enjoy through Christ." But then it is insisted that "this promise is not contained in the covenant of circumcision, but in a covenant made with Abraham twenty-four years before."*

It would seem that the controversy, so far as the covenant with Abraham is concerned, is here brought within narrow limits. If it can be shown that the promise above quoted is a part of this covenant, it can never more be disputed that this covenant comprises the covenant of grace. It will be proved, that the covenant with Abraham is "the ever memorable charter of all the blessings, which Jewish and Gentile believers enjoy through Christ."

It is manifest that God made but *one* covenant with Abraham. His covenant transactions with the patriarch are spoken of throughout the Scriptures in the *singular* form. "The Lord thy God will not forget *the covenant* of the fathers." Deut. iv. 31. "To remember his holy *covenant*, the oath which he aware to Abraham." Luke i. 72. "Ye are the children of *the covenant* which God made with our fathers." Acts iii. 25. In these and the parallel passages, the covenant with Abraham is spoken of as *one*.

There is as much reason to suppose that God made *eight* distinct covenants with Abraham, as that he made more than one. God appeared to him and addressed him in covenant language at eight different times;† nor is there anything in the subjects on which he addressed him, which would lead us to fix on two covenants, rather than on eight. Those, therefore, who do not believe that

* Judson's Sermon, p. 24.

† Gen. xii. 1 and 7; xiii. 14; xv. 1; xvii; xviii; xxi. 12; xxii. 15.

God made *eight* distinct covenants with Abraham, have no reason to suppose that he made more than one.

It is evident from the *similarity* of the promises which at different times were made to Abraham, that they all belong to one and the same covenant. The promise of a numerous posterity was made and repeated to him, at no less than *seven* different times.* The promise of the land of Canaan was made at *four* different times.† The promise of God to be his portion was also made to Abraham, impliedly or expressly, at *four* different times.‡ And the promise that in him all nations and families should be blessed, was made at *three* different times.‖ Is it likely that promises so similarly repeated and intermingled should be considered as belonging to more than one covenant? And is it posible to form more than one covenant from them; without putting asunder things which God hath joined together, and doing violence to the sacred text?

These promises of the covenant seem to have been repeated at different times, for the trial and confirmation of the patriarch's faith. Before he was finally constituted the father of believers, and the covenant was sealed and confirmed with an oath; it was necessary that his faith should endure severe trials. And it was highly proper, amidst these trials, that he should be strengthened and supported by repeated promises and encouragements. §

* Gen. xii. 2; xiii. 16; xv. 5; xvii. 2; xviii. 18; xxi. 13; xxii. 17.

† Gen. xii. 7; xiii. 15; xv. 7; xvii. 8.

‡ Gen. xii. 3; xv. 1; xvii. 7; xxii. 17.

‖ Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18.

§ The process of these covenant transactions, says Dr. Reed, "exhibits a most striking and beautiful climax. In the first instance, we see the blessing confirmed to Abraham and his seed by *promise*. Gen. xii. 1—3; secondly, the promised blessing is confirmed by *covenant*, Chap. xv. 18; thirdly, the covenanted blessing is confirmed, by annexing the token of *circumcision*, Chap. xvii. 10; and fourthly, by the *oath* of Almighty God, Chap. xxii. 16." Reed's Apology, p. 66.

God's covenant transactions with Abraham were renewed with both Isaac and Jacob; and it is certain from these *renewals* of them; that they constitute but one covenant. In both instances, those promises, which from time to time had been made to Abraham, and which some have endeavored to separate into two distinct covenants, are brought together within the compass of three verses. "The Lord appeared unto Isaac and said, Go not down into Egypt; sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee and bless thee: For unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries. And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and I will give unto thy seed all these countries; and *in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*" Gen. xxvi. 2—4. To Jacob also God said, "I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and *in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*" Gen. xxviii. 13—15.

It is most manifest, indeed, that God never made but one covenant with Abraham. And if he never made but one covenant with him, then certainly the promise, that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed constituted a part of this covenant. Indeed, this is expressly asserted by the Apostle Peter. "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of *the covenant* which God made with our fathers, saying, unto Abraham, *And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.*" Acts iii. 25. This promise is here expressly quoted, as belonging to the *one covenant* which God made with Abraham.

It further appears that this promise is included in the covenant with Abraham, since it is of *the same import*

with some of the promises which were made at the time when circumcision was instituted. God repeatedly promised, at this time, that Abraham should be "the *father* of many nations;" or that many nations should be *his children*. And how does this differ from the other promise, 'In thee shall the nations of the earth be blessed?' Can the nations be blessed in Abraham in any other way, than by becoming his spiritual children? Or can they have him for their father, and become his spiritual children, and not be blessed in him?—Evidently, the two promises, 'I will make thee a father of many nations,' and 'Many nations shall be blessed in thee,' are of the same import; and consequently, what has been denominated, by way of eminence, the "gospel promise"—"the ever memorable charter of all the blessings which Jewish and Gentile believers enjoy through Christ," is included in the covenant with Abraham.

3. I shall endeavor to show from *various representations of Scripture*, that the covenant with Abraham still exists, as the covenant of the church.—I begin with a declaration of the Apostle, which has been already quoted for a different purpose. "This I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." Gal. iii. 17. It is evident from this passage, not only that the covenant with Abraham was not abolished with the Levitical law, but that it was a *gospel* covenant, and as such still exists, and is valid. It "was confirmed of God *in Christ*." And not only so, it was a covenant of *promise*,—that promise, according to which all the spiritual children of Abraham are represented in a following verse as being heirs of the heavenly inheritance." "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and *heirs according to the promise*."

In various parts of the New Testament, Abraham is spoken of as the *father* of believers, and they are represented as *his children*. The Apostle Paul accounts for this, by referring us directly to the *covenant* with Abraham,—of which circumcision was the seal or token. "He (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised, *that he might be the father of all them that believe*; though they be not circumcised." Rom. iv. 11. In other words, he received the sign of circumcision, and the covenant of which this was a part, *that he might be the father of believers*, and *that they might be his spiritual children*.

In a following verse, the Apostle justifies himself in speaking of Abraham as the father of believers, and of them as his seed, by quoting a part of the covenant with Abraham, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to *all the seed*; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, *who is the father of us all*; as it is written, *I have made thee a father of many nations*."

From these representations it is evident, that the peculiar relation between believers and Abraham is founded on the covenant with Abraham; and so long as this relation exists—so long as Abraham continues to be the father of believers, and they are his children—so long this covenant must remain in force.

In the passage above quoted from Rom. iv. 11, circumcision is called "a *seal of the righteousness of faith*." It made sure to all who received it, that faith like that of Abraham, and like that required in the covenant with Abraham, *was imputed for righteousness*, and stood connected with *justification*.* It follows, therefore, that

* "It (circumcision) seals *the truth of the gospel*, viz. that there is

true faith was required, and justification promised, in the covenant with Abraham; and consequently that this was a gospel covenant, comprising the covenant of grace.

When the tongue of Zacharias was loosed, on the birth of his son, he "prophesied saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people ..... to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his *holy covenant, the oath which he sware to our father Abraham*" &c. Luke i. 67—75. Zacharias here speaks, like the more ancient prophets, of events future, as though they were already past. "He *hath visited* and *redeemed* his people," i. e. he *will* visit and redeem them. And it is evident from this whole passage, that the covenant with Abraham, so far from being abolished, must continue in unabated force, till God has completed the redemption of his people.

The existence of this covenant under the gospel dispensation is clearly established by the Apostle Peter. Addressing the people soon after the day of Pentecost, he says, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of *the covenant* which God made with our fathers saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." Acts iii. 25. The old dispensation had now ceased, and the new one had been ushered in. Yet those whom the Apostle addressed are represented as still the children of the prophets, and of the covenant with Abraham.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing, I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee ..... that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong con-

righteousness in the faith of Abraham, or that all who have Abraham's faith have righteousness." Carson and Cox on Baptism, p. 359.

solation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Heb. vi. 13—18. In this passage, we have an express reference to a promise of the covenant with Abraham, as recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis; and it is evident from the whole sentence, that the promises of this covenant, being afterwards confirmed by an oath, are now the covenant in which Christians stand. We are told that it was confirmed by an oath, that "*we*"—*professing Christians*—"might have strong consolation." But how should the confirmation of this covenant by an oath afford strong consolation to professing Christians, unless this is in fact the covenant of the church now, as it was of the church under the former dispensation?

I have now proved the continued existence of the covenant with Abraham, by *inference*—from its having *never been abolished*—from the *nature* of the covenant itself—and from *the concurrent testimony of the word of God.* I only add,

4. That it is expressly and frequently declared to be an *everlasting* covenant. "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, for an *everlasting* covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." Gen. xvii. 7. This covenant is also spoken of in the New Testament as to exist *forever.* "He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spake to our fathers, *to Abraham, and to his seed forever.* Luke i. 55. I know it will be objected, that the terms everlasting and forever are often used in Scripture to express a limited duration. But to this it may be replied, that the duration expressed by these terms is never limited but by the nature of the subjects to which they are applied; and that to suppose it limited by the nature of the subject under consideration is to take for granted the very point in dispute. It has been shown

that the covenant with Abraham comprises the covenant of grace. So long, therefore, as the redeemed subjects of grace continue in glory, the covenant of Abraham will not be forgotten. It will doubtless be stripped of its external appendages, when these shall be no longer needful; but in its more spiritual essential parts, it will be literally everlasting.

Section III.

The Relation of the Children of Covenanting Parents to the Church.

Under the Christian dispensation, as under the Jewish, the infant children of covenanting parents sustain a peculiar relation to the church. What this relation is, or whether it may with propriety be denominated membership, I do not now inquire. This branch of the subject will be considered in another place. But that there subsists an intimate and peculiar relationship between such children and the church, I have no doubt.

This is an incontestable inference from what has been already established. No one doubts that children stood in a very near relation to the church of Israel; but if the church, under both dispensations, has been the same, then this relation continues. It is indubitable, that children were formerly interested in the covenant with Abraham. Its requirements respected them. Its promises reached them. Abraham must circumcise his children, as well as himself. He must "command his children and his household after him," as well as pursue for himself the path of duty. And on the other hand, God promised to be their God, as well as his. But this covenant is still the covenant of the church; and whatever connexion it established formerly between the child and the church, it establishes now. The Christian parent, like the Jewish, is bound in covenant to train up his children for God.

And if the Jew could plead a promise in favor of his offspring, the Christian can do the same: "The promise is to you and to your children." Acts ii. 39.

But the relation of children to the church under the new dispensation does not stand on the mere ground of inference. It is recognized in many parts of the sacred volume.—The ancient prophets, when looking forward to the times of the gospel, assume the continued relation of children to the church. Thus Jeremiah, speaking with an ultimate reference to the restoration of Israel in the latter days, says, "*Their children shall be as aforetime*, and their congregation (or church) shall be established before me." Chap. xxx. 20. And Isaiah, predicting the future blessedness of God's people, says, "They are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and *their offspring with them*." Chap. lxv. 23.

Some of the friends of our Saviour, at a certain time, "brought unto him infants, that he would touch them. And when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus said, suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; *for of such is the kingdom of God*." Luke xviii. 15, 16. It cannot be denied that these were literally *little children*. They are expressly called (βρεφη) *infants*; they were brought to Christ in their parents' arms; and were taken up in his arms and blessed. Compare Matt. xix. 13 and Mark x. 16. But "*of such* is the kingdom of God;" or more properly, *to such belong the privileges of this kingdom.*

I know it is said that the phrase "*of such*" imports not "such in age and size, but such in the moral temper of heart; in humility and docility of disposition."* But this interpretation cannot be admitted. It stamps absurdity on the reasoning of the Saviour. Why should he

* Judson's Sermon, p. 30.

be displeased with his disciples for forbidding *infants in years* to be brought to him, because a humble disposition was necessary in *grown persons*, to fit them for his kingdom? Or, as Storr and Flatt express it, "the proposition, *the kingdom of heaven belongs to humble adults*, would be no reason why *children* should not be prevented from coming to Jesus."*

On another occasion, our Saviour, having taken a little child in his arms, said, "Whosoever shall receive one of such children *in my name*, receiveth me." Mark ix. 37. The phrase, "*in my name*," as interpreted by our Lord himself in a following verse, imports a *belonging to Christ*, or sustaining some *peculiar relation* to him. "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink *in my name*, because *ye belong to Christ*, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." From these passages, taken together, it is certain that our Saviour regarded the children of his friends, who were brought to him for his blessing, as in some sense *belonging to him*, and entitled to the privileges of his kingdom.

Paul wrote to his Corinthian brethren as follows:—"The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they (αγια) *holy*." 1 Cor. vii. 14. It is obvious to remark on this passage, that if the children are holy when only one parent is a believer, they certainly must be when both are believers. Hence all the children of believing parents, not only at Corinth, but throughout the earth, are here virtually declared, on divine authority, to be *holy*. But in what sense? I am not aware that the word *holy* is

* Dr. Gale admits that the phrase, "*of such*," refers to infants in years. Reflections on Wall, p. 421.—Augustine interprets the passage above considered as having reference to the baptism of children. See Wall's History, Chap. 15.

used in more than two senses in the sacred writings. It uniformly expresses either an *internal* or *external*, a *real* or *relative* holiness. That the children of believers are *really*, *internally* holy, is not pretended. The holiness ascribed to them is, therefore, a *visible* or *relative* holiness. They are called holy, because of their *consecration* to God; and because of *the relation* which they sustain to his people.*

But it is objected, that the same holiness which belongs to the child is also ascribed to the unbelieving parent: He (ηγιασται) "is sanctified" by the believer.—A correct interpretation of the passage will be a sufficient answer to this objection. The sanctification of which the unbelieving parent is the subject, and the holiness attributed to the children, are both *relative*. They pertain to a *relation*, and not to the moral characters of the individuals. The word *sanctify* is sometimes used to express a *relation to a religious society*. So in the passage before us: "The unbelieving husband *is sanctified* by the wife," &c. That is, the unbelieving husband, because of his believing wife, is brought into a near, peculiar, and in some sense *sacred relation to the community of Christians;* on account of which his children are not regarded as unclean or pagan, but are *holy*, *consecrated to God*, and *connected with the society of his people.*

Some of our Baptist brethren have insisted, that the Apostle, in this passage, is proving to the Corinthians, from the acknowledged fact that their children were not unclean but holy, that the co-habitation of the believer with the unbeliever was lawful marriage. But in respect to what law had the legitimacy of their marriage been

* "They are considered as *members of the Christian church*." Schleusner.

"They are to be considered as *belonging to the Christian community*." Wahl.

called in question? Not, surely, in respect to the laws of Corinth. The believer never supposed he violated these laws, by continuing his connexion with the unbeliever. The question (if there was any) must have respected the laws of God. The Corinthians knew that God's ancient people were forbidden, not only to be joined with strangers, but to continue such connexions after they were formed. Ezra x. 3. They knew also that the offspring of these prohibited connexions had been considered unclean, out of covenant, and as not belonging to "the holy seed." Ezra ix. 2. It is not unlikely, therefore, that the Corinthian believers, who were married to unbelievers, called in question the legality of continuing such connexions; and that the Apostle, for their satisfaction, referred them to the well known fact, that their children had not been rejected as unclean, and out of covenant, but had been publicly recognized as holy.

The Epistles of Paul are in most instances addressed to particular *churches;* as the church at Rome, the church at Corinth, the churches in Galatia, &c. But we find, on examination, that several of these Epistles contain directions for children. "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor thy father and mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." See Eph. vi. 1, and Col. iii. 20. Is it not evident from these passages, that the Apostle regarded the children of church members as in some way connected with the churches, or as sustaining a very near and peculiar relation to them? Else, why should he so particularly address himself to children, in Epistles directed expressly to the churches?

At the commencement of the new dispensation, the followers of Christ were a body by themselves, and their property was vested in a common stock. They "that believed," we are told, "were together, and had all things

common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted to all men, as every man had need." Acts ii. 44. But where were their children at this time? Were not they associated with their parents? Would the Christian parent vest all his property in the common stock, and cast his infant children upon the world? It is beyond all controversy that the children of Christians in those days were associated with their parents, and sustained a near and peculiar relation to the church of Christ.

Another fact which deserves notice in this connexion is, that the Jewish converts continued, for many years, to *circumcise* their children, and to do it under the immediate charge and direction of the Apostles. We are told that the great church at Jerusalem, which consisted of "many thousands," and was under the pastoral care of the Apostle James, were not a little displeased when they heard of Paul, that he taught the Jews "not to circumcise their children." Acts xxi. 20. Now what does this fact of circumcision prove? Undoubtedly, that the children of believing parents were at that time regarded as holding some connexion with the church of Christ. Had the covenant with Abraham been abolished, and had it been the intention of the Apostles to separate in future between children and the church, they never would have countenanced, or so much as tolerated, the circumcision of children. They would as soon have tolerated the Gentiles in the worship of their idols.

From the Apostles' times to the present, the connexion of children with the church has been sanctioned by the general voice of professing Christians. Such was clearly the understanding in the primitive church, as all who are acquainted with the writings and doings of the early fathers very well know. Thus, the Council of Eliberis, which assembled about two hundred years after the Apostles, speaks of infants being carried over from *the*

Catholic church to heresy, before the fault could be their own.* And at a much earlier period, Hermas saw certain stones taken out of the deep, and fitted into the building, *the church*, and was told by an angel that these represented members in the *first* or *infant* age.†

Indeed, the peculiar relation of children to the church (with some diversity of explanation and practice) has been constantly maintained, by Greeks, Catholics, Episcopalians, and by most denominations of Protestant Dissenters, even to our own times.

Section IV.

The Substitution of Baptism in the place of Circumcision.

That baptism is now substituted in the place of circumcision is an incontestable inference from the fact, that *the church, under both dispensations, has been the same.* Baptism is now, what circumcision was in ancient times, an instituted pre-requisite to a regular standing in the visible church. If, therefore, the church has been, under both dispensations, the same, the conclusion cannot be resisted that baptism has come in the place of circumcision.

The same conclusion results also from the fact, that *the covenant with Abraham is still the covenant of the church.* Of this covenant, circumcision was formerly the token. "It (circumcision) shall be *a token* of the covenant betwixt me and thee." Gen. xvii. 11. But circumcision has been abolished, and baptism, an ordinance of the same church, and of course, under the same covenant, has been instituted. How plain, therefore, that baptism has taken the place of circumcision, as the visible token of the covenant of the church?

* Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. Part i. Chap. 7.

† Similitude ix. Chap. 15.

This conclusion is confirmed by the consideration that circumcision and baptism are of precisely *the same import.* Circumcision, as a token of the covenant, was both a *sign* and a *seal.* As a *sign*, it represented the circumcision of the heart, or regeneration. "Circumcision is of the *heart*, in the *spirit*, and not in the letter." Rom. ii. 29. As a *seal*, circumcision confirmed "the righteousness of faith," or the covenant of grace. Rom. iv. 11. Such was the import of circumcision. And is not that of baptism precisely similar? This, too, is both a *sign* and a *seal.* As a *sign*, it is an emblem of the washing of regeneration, or the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It therefore *signifies* the same as circumcision. Does it not also *seal* the same? Does it not assure those who receive it that, if their characters are conformed to its sacred import, their faith shall be imputed to them for righteousness, and they be interested in all the blessings of the covenant of grace?—But if, when the ancient token of the covenant was abolished, an ordinance was established in the same church, and appended to the same covenant, of *precisely similar import*; how is it possible to resist the conclusion, that this latter is substituted for the former?*

The Scriptures clearly countenance the idea, that baptism is substituted in the place of circumcision. Writing to the Philippians, the Apostle says, "Beware of the concision," (those persons who lay an exorbitant stress on the rite of circumcision) "for *we*"—we who have been baptized—"*are the circumcision*, which worship God in the spirit." Phil. iii. 2, 3. And to the Colossians he says, "*Ye are circumcised* with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, *buried with him in*

* See Appendix, Note E.

baptism." Col. ii. 11, 12. In other words, '*Ye are circumcised, having been baptized.*'

If it be objected, that *spiritual* circumcision and *spiritual* baptism are here intended, I admit that they are; and the Apostle represents them to be *the same.* And if these two ordinances are *spiritually* the same, and if the one was instituted in the church on the removal of the other, is it not plain that the one is substituted for the other?

The primitive Christian fathers considered baptism as having come in the place of circumcision.

Justin Martyr says, "We have not received this carnal circumcision, but the spiritual circumcision; and we have received it *by baptism.* It is allowed to all persons to receive it in the same way."*

In the Questions to the Orthodox, attributed to Justin, we have the following Question and Answer: "If circumcision be a good thing, why do not we use it as well as the Jews?" Ans. "We are *circumcised by baptism* with Christ's circumcision."†

The question of Fidus to Cyprian and the Council of Carthage, *whether it be lawful to baptize an infant sooner than the eighth day,* necessarily supposes it to have been an established opinion that baptism had come in the place of circumcision. Indeed, Cyprian says expressly, that "Christ has given us baptism, *the spiritual circumcision.*"*

Basil says, "A Jew does not delay circumcision, because of the threatening, that every soul that is not circumcised the eighth day shall be cut off from his people; and dost thou put off the circumcision made without hands, which is performed *in baptism,* when thou hearest

* Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. Vol. i. Chapters ii. vi. xi.

† Part i. Chap. 2.

the Lord himself say, except one be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God ?"*

Ambrose clearly speaks of baptism as having come in the place of circumcision.*

Augustine says, "We may make an estimate how much *baptism* avails infants, by the *circumcision* which God's people formerly received.*

Chrysostom says, "*Our communion*, I mean the grace of *baptism*, gives cure without pain, and procures to us a thousand benefits. And it has no determinate time, as the ancient circumcision had ; but one in the very *beginning of his age*, or one that is in the middle of it, or one that is in his old age, may receive this circumcision made without hands."*

To the sentiment inculcated in this Section there have been objections, which it may be proper briefly to consider.

1. It is said that the substitution of baptism in place of circumcision was not urged, as might have been expected, in reply to those Judaizing teachers, who were for enforcing circumcision on the Gentile converts. Acts xv. But these teachers wished to enforce on the Gentiles, not only circumcision, but the *whole ritual law ;* and to enforce it all as *a condition of salvation.* "Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, or ye cannot be saved." It would, then, not have satisfied them in the least, to have urged that baptism had been substituted for circumcision. The grand difficulty had still remained, 'Ye must keep the law, or ye cannot be saved.'—It appears that, as far as the proposed answer would have

* Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. Vol. i. Chapters xii—xv. It will be observed that several of the fathers speak of baptism (in the language of the Apostle, Col. ii. 11, 12.) as "the circumcision made without hands." It is evident from this, that *they* understood the Apostle, in the passage referred to, as teaching the substitution of baptism in place of circumcision.

availed with these teachers, it was virtually given. For it was authoritatively determined in Apostolic council, that the Gentile brethren—those who had been baptized—had no need to be circumcised.

2. It is objected that the Jewish believers knew nothing of the substitution of baptism in place of circumcision, as they continued, under the direction of the Apostles, to circumcise their children. But why did the Apostles, or any of them, permit the Jewish converts to circumcise their children? Not, surely, because they regarded circumcision as still binding. They acted in this case, as in many others, from a commendable regard in things indifferent, to the long established customs and prejudices of the Jews. As the import of the two ordinances was the same, and the relation of children to the church was intended to be continued, they saw, no inconsistency in yielding, for a time, to this feeling of the Jewish converts. But this same feeling of regard, which led the Apostles to tolerate circumcision, would prompt them not to enlarge on the substitution of baptism in its place.

3. It is urged that baptism cannot have come in the place of circumcision, since the latter was applied to none but males. But why was circumcision applied to none but males? Not because of anything in its *internal import*, which rendered it improper that it should be administered to females; for these were included in the covenant with Abraham, and were really *of the circumcision*, as much as the males.* The reason lay in the peculiar nature of the external ceremony. God, in his wisdom, instituted a token of his covenant, under the former dispensation, which could be applied to but one of

* No uncircumcised person was allowed to partake of the Passover Yet females partook of it as well as males; (See Luke ii. 41.) which shows that though they bore not the external mark, they were regarded as *of the circumcision*.

the sexes. In the exercise of the same wisdom, he has appointed a token under the present dispensation, which can be applied to both. And to use the language of Mr. Flavel: "Cannot baptism stand in the place of circumcision, because it answers all its ends, with an *advantage*?" —We know that, under the former dispensation, a distinction obtained between the sexes in regard to most divine institutions. But this distinction is now in general abolished; so that under the Gospel, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither *male nor female*." Both sexes participate equally in Christ, and have equal access to the ordinances of his kingdom.

4. It is objected again, that if baptism has come in the place of circumcision, then *servants* as well as children must be baptized. Abraham was commanded to circumcise him that was "bought with money of any stranger, which was not of his seed."—To this it may be replied, that certain practices were tolerated under the former dispensation, which are at present disallowed. Such were polygamy, slavery, &c. Unless it can be shown that the New Testament authorizes the purchase and holding of slaves, and of consequence the slave trade, the case so far as it is objectionable, can no more *lawfully* occur.*

5. It is farther objected that, on the ground we have taken, baptism cannot be lawfully administered to children sooner or later than the eighth day. "He that is *eight days old* shall be circumcised among you."—The reason why circumcision was enjoined on the eighth day

* It is believed that children, who are taken permanently into the families and under the care and government of professing Christians, may with propriety be baptized. Christians may consistently be sponsors for such children. They may enter into covenant respecting them that they will train them up for God, and may seal their engagements in the water of baptism.

is clearly expressed in the law of Moses. "If a woman have borne a man child, she shall be unclean *seven days*, and on the *eighth day* he shall be circumcised." Lev. xii. 2, 3. On account of the mother's uncleanness, her child could not lie at her breast, or so much as touch her, until after seven days, without contracting ceremonial pollution. And on the eighth day it must be circumcised. The language of the covenant was then virtually this, 'Let the child be circumcised as soon as possible.' And such is still its language in respect to baptism.

The principles which have been here established furnish a reply to an objection which is sometimes urged against the baptism of children. 'If baptism signifies regeneration, then why should it be applied to children, or to any but hopefully regenerated persons?' But circumcision signified regeneration as much as baptism; and yet this was *expressly commanded* to be applied to children. The truth is, that while both circumcision and baptism shadow forth regeneration, and import *its necessity*, they do not of themselves certify that all those to whom they are applied are regenerated persons. Baptism was administered by Philip to Simon the sorcerer; but this did not prove him to be regenerated. And neither does circumcision or baptism, when applied to infants, indicate that they are, at the time, the subjects of a regenerating influence.

Section V.

The Infant Children of believing, covenanting parents are to be baptized.

This is the great point in controversy, in relation to the *subjects* of baptism. And it is a proposition, the truth of which may be inferred from what has been established in each of the preceding Sections.

If the Christian church is the same with the church of Israel, in which children were visibly dedicated to God; then doubtless *they are to be dedicated still.*

If the covenant with Abraham, the token of which belonged to the offspring of those interested in it, is still the covenant of the visible church; then *the members of this church are still under obligations to apply the token to their infant children.*

If the children of covenanting parents sustain a relation to the visible church, as they did to the church of Israel; then *they must be proper subjects of that rite by which this relation is established.*

And if baptism is substituted in place of circumcision which was applied, by a divine command, to the seed of covenanting parents; then *the same divine command now binds the covenanting parent to apply baptismal water to his infant offspring.*

Here is the *foundation* of infant baptism;—a foundation as sure as the word of God,—and on which the ordinance, I doubt not, will rest, till the end of time.

What remains is to introduce some *collateral* evidence in support of the proposition, that the children of believing covenanting parents are to be baptized. And,

1. The sentiment contained in this proposition, is *reasonable* in itself, and in accordance with our *best affections.* In the children of those we love, we all naturally feel a peculiar interest. A good Prince would wish and provide, that the children of his beloved and faithful friends should be placed in a near relation to himself. And shall it be supposed that the Prince of life will not regard with tokens of peculiar favor the children of his covenant people? Will he not grant them some special pledge of love? Will he take his people under the shadow of his wings, and make no special provision for their offspring. In his care of the sheep, will he forget the

lambs of his flock?—And how reasonable that the pious parent, who loves his children and is chiefly concerned for their spiritual welfare, should wish to place them under the particular care and protection of Jehovah;—should wish publicly to dedicate and devote them to God, and bind himself by solemn vows to train them up for him?*

2. The *analogy* of God's covenant dealings in past ages is in favor of the doctrine of infant baptism. In all the covenants which God has hitherto made with men, children have been connected with their parents. Thus it was in the covenant with Adam; and in the covenant with Noah; and in the covenant with Abraham; and in the covenant with David. God dealt favorably with the children of Lot for their father's sake; and he declares himself to be a God, keeping covenant with those that love him "to a thousand generations." How unlikely then, let the covenant of the Christian church be what it may, that God has swerved from the invariable economy of his covenant dealings in past ages, and cut off children under the gospel from any kind of connexion with their covenanting parents.

3. If infant baptism is not according to Scripture, then the privileges of believers under the present dispensation are less than they were formerly under the law. It is a precious privilege to the enlightened Christian parent, to bring his beloved children to Christ; publicly to resign them into his hands; promise to educate them according to his precepts; and to see affixed to them the token of his holy covenant. It is a privilege "to do this in the temple of God, where the prayers of many will ascend with his own to the Lord of heaven and earth, for a blessing." As believing parents formerly enjoyed this privilege, it is unreasonable to suppose that they are de-

* Se Appendix, Note F.

prived of it now. Under this last and best dispensation of the gospel, when it might be expected that privileges would be uniformly increased, and burthens diminished, how unreasonable the supposition that believers are cut off from an inestimable privilege, which was secured to them by the Mosaic ritual. Lev. xii. 3.

4. Had children been deprived of their interest in the covenant under the gospel dispensation, believing Jewish parents in the primitive church would have undoubtedly complained. In the days of the Apostles, many thousands of the Jews believed, who were all *zealous of the law.* They were tenacious even of their former *burthens;* and can we suppose they would cheerfully relinquish their accustomed privileges? Prepared, as Mr. Edwards expresses it, "to wrangle for a rite, quarrel for a fast, and almost fight for a new moon;" would they see their children cut off from the covenant of promise, and denied its token, without a struggle? Yet we hear not a word of complaint on the subject. There was no objection to the gospel, by friend or foe, on this ground. It is morally certain, therefore, that under the present dispensation, as under the ancient, the children of covenanting parents are to be publicly dedicated to the Lord.

5. The Jewish *prosolyte* baptism furnishes a conclusive argument in favor of the baptism of children with their parents. At the time of our Saviour's appearance, and for ages previous, the Jews had been accustomed, not only to circumcise their proselytes, but to *baptize* them, together with *their children.*—As the existence of such a practice among the Jews has been disputed, and as much has been made to depend upon it, it will be necessary to establish it by proof. And,

(1.) The baptism of proselytes comports entirely with the genius of the Mosaic institutions, and with the views which the Israelites were accustomed to entertain of the

Gentile nations. Nothing was more common among this people than lustrations, and purifications by washing, or baptism. In these, the external part of their religion in no small degree consisted. See Heb. ix. 10. And as they considered all the Gentiles to be *impure, unclean,* how natural was it for them to insist, when any of these came over to their religion, that they should be ceremonially purified by the application of water?

(2.) That the Jews were familiar with baptism, previous to the coming of Christ, is implied in the question addressed to John by those who were sent to him from Jerusalem: "*Why baptizest thou then,* if thou be not the Christ, neither Elias, neither that prophet?" John i. 25. The inquiry was not, 'What *new rite* is this?' but 'Why do *you* administer it?' They had been long acquainted with the ordinance of baptism, but if John was "not the Christ, neither Elias, neither that prophet," they understood not by what authority, or for what reason, he had undertaken to baptize.

(3.) All the Rabbins, ancient and modern, bear testimony to the custom of baptizing proselytes. Thus in the Babylonian Talmud, the text of which was composed as early as the close of the second century, it is written: "When a proselyte is received, he must be circumcised; and when he is cured, they *baptize* him in the presence of two wise men. Or if it be a woman, the women lead her to the waters."

"The proselytes enter not into covenant, but by circumcision, *baptism,* and sprinkling of blood."

"He is no proselyte, unless he be circumcised and *baptized.* If he be not *baptized,* he remains a Gentile."

"Your fathers did not enter into covenant but by circumcision, and *baptism,* and sprinkling of blood; so neither do proselytes enter into covenant but by circumcision, and *baptism,* and sprinkling of blood."

"They baptize an *infant* proselyte (parvulum) according to the judgment of the Sanhedrim;" and "if it has been bereaved of its father, three men must be present at the baptism, who may be as a father to it."

"If a Gentile woman is made a proselyte, *cum jam est gravida*, her child has no need of baptism; because the baptism of the mother answers for the child. Otherwise, *it must be baptized*."*

In the Jerusalem Talmud, it is said, "Behold one finds an infant cast out, and *baptizes* him in the name of a servant. Do thou also circumcise him in the name of a servant. But if he *baptize* him in the name of a freeman, do thou also circumcise him in the name of a freeman."†

Maimonides gives us the following account of the forms of initiation among the Jews: "In all ages, when a Gentile is willing to enter into the covenant of Israel, and place himself under the wings of the Divine Majesty, and take upon him the yoke of the law, he must be circumcised, and *baptized*, and bring a sacrifice; or if it be a woman, be *baptized* and bring a sacrifice: As it is written, 'As ye are, so shall the stranger be.' Numb. xv. 15. How are ye? By circumcision, and baptism, and bringing a sacrifice. So likewise the stranger, through all your generations, by circumcision, and baptism, and bringing a sacrifice."

"An Israelite that takes a little heathen child, or that finds an heathen infant, and *baptizes* him for a proselyte, behold he is a proselyte."†

(4.) Other writers besides Jews, ancient and modern, who have paid most attention to the subject, and been in the most favorable circumstances to form an opinion, have

* In Wall's Introduction to Hist. of In. Bap. and Lightfoot's Horæ Hebraicæ on Matt. iii. 6.

† In Wall's Introduction to Hist. of In. Bap.

been generally agreed in maintaining that the Jews baptized their proselytes.

Arrian, a heathen philosopher at Rome, A. D. 140, reproaches those who turned proselytes to the Jews, calling them (βεβαμμενους) the *baptized* ones.*

Cyprian, a Christian father of the third century, says, "The case of the Jews who were to be baptized by the Apostles was different from that of the Gentiles; for the Jews had already, and a long time ago, *the baptism of the law and of Moses*, and were now to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."† It is evident from this, that Cyprian supposed the Jews to have administered baptism to one another and to their proselytes, even from the time of Moses.

Leo Modena, in his History of the Modern Jews, speaking of their manner of admiting a proselyte, says, "They take and circumcise him, and as soon as he is well of his sore, he is to wash himself all over in water; and this is to be done in the presence of three Rabbins. From thenceforth he becomes as a natural Jew."‡

Lightfoot says, "You see baptism inseparably joined to the circumcision of proselytes." "The baptism of infants was a thing as well known in the church of the Jews, as ever it has been in the Christian church."||

Reiskius, who wrote a treatise on the baptisms of the Jews, says, "Jewish baptism is a solemn rite instituted by God, in which proselytes of both sexes, in the presence of three credible witnesses are dipped in water, that being legally cleansed and regenerated, they may enter on the profession of a new religion.§

Jahn treats the subject somewhat at length, and is decidedly of the opinion that the initiation of the proselyte was not complete until after baptism.¶

* Dissert. in Epictet. Lib. ii. Cap. 9. † Epis. 73, ad Jubianum.
‡ Part v. Chap. 2. || Horæ Hebraicæ in Matt. iii. 6.
§ Diss. de Bap. Judeorum. ¶ Archaeology, Sect. 325.

Rosenmuller and Kuinoel both say, that "the traces of this rite (baptism) are found in the baptism of proselytes: As it is handed down by the Jews with an entire agreement, that if any one should come over from the Gentiles to the religion of the Jews, both himself, with his wife, and children, and infants, were to be baptized."*

It would be needless to multiply authorities in proof of this point. Those who are not satisfied, and wish to investigate the subject farther, may consult the authors referred to in the margin.† Suffice it to say, that with the exception of a few individuals, whose opinions were founded, not on any positive evidence against the practice in question, but merely on the *silence* of certain Jewish writers respecting it,‡ the judgment of the learned has been given with singular explicitness and unanimity in its favor.

(5.) I only add, that *the existence* of baptism among the Jews can hardly be accounted for, unless it be traced to a period anterior to the commencement of the Christian era. We certainly know that they baptized their prose-

* Scholia in Matt. iii. 6.

† Selden de Jure Nat. et Gent. Lib. ii. Cap. 4. p. 153. item de Synedriis; item de Successionibus; Jacob. Altingii de Proselytis, Praelectio vii. Thes. 27; Michaelis Dogm. Sec. 180; Ernesti Vindiciae Arbit. Div. Sec. 49; Ainsworth on Gen. 17; Dr. Hammond's Annotations on Matt. iii, xix, xxiii; also his Six Queries; also his Defence of In. Baptism; Godwin's Moses and Aaron; Wetstein's, Henry's, and Scott's Comment. on Matt. iii. 6; Clarke's Comment. on Matt. xxviii. 19; Doddridge's Lectures, Prop. 154; Calmet's and Brown's Dictionary of the Bible, Art. Proselyte; Witsius' Economy of Covenants, Vol. iii. p. 381; Prideaux' Connexion, Vol. iii. p. 411; Stackhouse's Hist. of the Bible, Vol. v. p. 286; Wall's Introduction to Hist. of In. Baptism; Wood's Lectures on In Bap. p. 48; Priestly's Monthly Repository, Vol. vii. p. 12; Chris. Observer for 1819, p. 604.

‡ Josephus' Account of the Proselyting of the Idumeans by Hyrcanus, if it does not imply, is very consistent with, the idea of their baptism. They submitted, it is said, not only to circumcision, but to "*the rest* of the Jewish customs." Antiq. Lib. xiii. Cap. 9. Sec. 1.

lytes in the second century, and have continued to do so in all periods since. But how did they come in possession of this rite? Did they copy it from the Christians? Is it likely that, so early as the second century, when Christianity was "every where spoken against," and not sufficiently established to invite the imitation of any, the Jews, its most inveterate enemies, should copy one of the sacraments of the despised Nazarene, and incorporate it among the institutions of their venerated lawgiver? To those who have any knowledge of Jewish prejudices, the supposition is utterly incredible. It follows, therefore, that the Jews must have received the custom of baptizing proselytes (as they profess) from the patriarchs of their nation, and that it was in common use at the coming of the Saviour.

When John commenced baptizing in the wilderness of Judea, he introduced no new rite into the religion of the Jews, nor was he ever complained of as an innovator. And when our Saviour directed his disciples to go and baptize the nations, he instituted no new rite, but merely adopted and sanctioned a previously existing Jewish institution. "The work of proselyting men to the true religion had before been carried on within narrow limits. It was now to be carried on extensively, and baptism (as before) was to be administered to all proselytes. 'Go ye, and proselyte the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'" Clearly, the disciples must have understood their Master to intend here that kind of baptism to which both they and he had been accustomed, viz. *the baptism of children with their parents.* Under these circumstances, instead of needing an express command to authorize the baptism of children, they must have needed a prohibition to prevent their doing it.*

* See Appendix, Note G.

But this leads me to observe,

6. That Christ and his Apostles taught and practised *just as we might expect*, on supposition they intended that children should be baptized; and *just as we should not expect*, on the contrary supposition. In order to determine what we might or might not expect of Christ and his Apostles, it will be necessary that we keep in mind the established customs of the period in which they lived. In the Jewish church, children had always been connected with their parents. They were early given up to God, and received the seal of his everlasting covenant. Also the children of proselytes were connected in covenant with their parents, and entitled to the initial rites of circumcision and baptism. What then might be expected of Christ and his Apostles, on supposition they intended to *put an end* to this state of things? Not silence, surely. Silence would have been a virtual approbation of it. The further connexion of children with their parents they would have constantly condemned. They would have lost no opportunity of insisting on the great change, in this respect, which had taken place under the new dispensation, and of pressing a conformity to it in the practice of Christians. Did they pursue such a course? *Never*, in any instance.*

But what might be expected of Christ and his Apostles, on supposition they intended that the connexion of children with their parents should be continued? Not, indeed, that they should enjoin it by *express precepts;* for this would be to enjoin expressly what every one already understood and practised. But they would be likely often to allude to it with approbation, and to drop expressions which implied it. They would be likely also, as occasions occurred, to baptize households, when those

* See Appendix, Note H.

at the head of them made profession of their faith. And this is the precise course pursued by our Saviour and his Apostles. The peace of Christ is promised to rest upon that *house* or *family* over which a son of peace presides. Luke x. 6. Salvation came to *the house* or family of Zaccheus, when he became a true child of Abraham. Luke xix. 9. Our Saviour applauded the practice of bringing infants to receive his blessing, and declared that "of such is the kingdom of God." Luke xviii. 15. He spoke of little children being received *in his name*, or as *belonging to him*. Mark ix. 37, 41. Peter taught converted parents, that the promise was to them and to *their children*. Acts ii. 39. Paul affirms that "the blessing of Abraham"—an important part of which consisted in the covenant connexion of his children—"has come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." Gal. iii. 14. He denominates the children of believing parents *holy*, 1 Cor. vii. 14; and addresses them as being in some way connected with the churches.* He repeatedly baptized households on the profession of parents, or of those who presided over them. Lydia believed, and she and her household were baptized. The jailer believed, and he and all his were baptized straightway. Acts xvi. 15, 33. Paul also baptized the household of Stephanas. 1 Cor. i. 16.

I know it will be said that the term *household* does not necessarily imply infants; and perhaps it does not *necessarily*. Still, few instances can be found, among the many in which this word is used in Scripture, where children are not evidently included. And "the stress of the business," as Dr. Lightfoot remarks, "lies not so much in this, whether it can be proved there were children in these households, as that, if there were, *they certainly were baptized.*"

* Compare Eph. i. 1 with Eph. vi. 1; and Col. i. 2 with Col. iii. 20.

It must have been very extraordinary, even in Apostolic times, if each of these households was composed entirely of adults, who were all converted and baptized together on a personal profession of faith. It may be doubted whether there have been three other such instances from that day to the present.* And why, if these remarkable events took place, were they not distinctly recorded? If the conversion of merely the heads of these families was of sufficient importance to have place in the sacred history, why should the simultaneous conversion of each of their households be passed over in silence?

It is urged as evidence that the family of Lydia were all professing believers, that before Paul and Silas left Philippi, they entered into her house and saw and comforted *the brethren*. Acts xvi. 40. But who were the brethren? Doubtless, the whole infant church. The members would *all* wish to come together, to hear the instructions and receive the parting blessing of their spiritual father; and what more convenient place than the house of Lydia? It is evident, on the face of the record, that of the family of Lydia she only was a believer. *Her* "heart the Lord opened." And after she and her household had received baptism, she said, "If ye have judged *me* to be faithful, come into my house." Acts xvi. 14, 15.

The jailer, it is said, "rejoiced, believing in God, with *all his house*."—If there is an ambiguity in this English phrase, there is none in the original; ἠγαλλιασατο πανοικὶ πεπιστευκως. It is certain from the Greek, as every one acquainted with the language must perceive, that the believing and rejoicing here spoken of, being in the *singular number*, can refer to the jailer only.

The Apostle, we are told, testifies of the household of

* See Appendix, Note I.

Stephanas, that "they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." 1 Cor. xvi. 15. But when the Apostle wrote this, they had been baptized several years. Shall we suppose, then, that, for years after their conversion, they were *unmindful* of the necessities of saints? Or is it not far more probable that they were not all converted at the time when they were baptized?

In the cases here considered, we have full evidence of the baptism of the households of Christians, in connexion with that of their parents, or guardians. It is worthy of remark, that we have no instance in the New Testament of the baptism of the children of professing Christians, *except* in such connexion. In other words, we have no instance of the baptism of such children, *on their own profession.* Is not this a remarkable circumstance, and one hard to be accounted for on the principles of those who reject infant baptism? The children of professing Christians, during the Apostolic age, had become very numerous; and in all probability, they were often converted. And why is it, if they were not baptized with their parents, that we have no intimation, in any instance, of their subsequent baptism?

To me, the New Testament appears, in this respect as in others, precisely what we might expect it would be, on supposition that the covenant connexion of children with their parents was intended to be continued and perpetuated.

7. It only remains that I adduce the testimony of *history* in favor of the practice of infant baptism. The pertinence and weight of this kind of evidence may be seen in the following quotation from an eminent Baptist writer: "I will grant it is probable, that what all or most of the churches practised immediately after the Apostles' times, had been appointed or practised by the Apostles themselves; for it is hardly to be imagined that any con-

siderable body of these ancient Christians, and much less that *the whole*, should so soon deviate from the customs and injunctions of their venerable founders, whose authority they held so sacred. New opinions or practices, are usually introduced by degrees, and not without opposition. Therefore, in regard to baptism, a thing of such universal concern and daily practice, I allow it to be *very probable that the primitive churches kept to the Apostolic pattern.*"*

Among the immediate successors of the Apostles, there were but few writers whose works have come down to us with unquestioned authority; and in these, the baptism of infants is rather alluded to and implied as an existing and approved practice, than expressly inculcated. I have shown already that the Christian fathers considered baptism as having come in the place of circumcision; and also that they considered the infant children of believing parents as in some way connected with the church.† But in both these propositions, it is implied, that such children were regarded as the proper subjects of baptism.

Hermas, whose name is mentioned by Paul, Rom. xvi. 14, and who is thought by some to have written his Pastor before John wrote his Gospel, says: "*All infants* are in honor with the Lord, and are esteemed first of all." And again: "The baptism of water is necessary *to all.*"‡

Justin Martyr, who wrote about forty years after the Apostolic age, says: "There are many among us of both sexes, some sixty, and some seventy years old, who were made disciples of Christ (ἐκ παιδων) from *their childhood.*"‡ These children must have been *made disciples*, years before the death of the Apostle John. They were doubtless made such by baptism; for the same word is used by Justin which was used by Christ in the commis-

* Gales Reflections on Wall, p. 398. † Sections iii. and iv.

‡ In Wall's Hist. of In. Baptism, Part i. Chap. 1—3.

sion, "Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them." Matt. xxviii. 19.

Irenæus, who wrote a few years later than Justin, says: "Christ passed through every age. For infants he became an infant, that he might *sanctify infants*."*

Again: "Christ came to save all persons who by him (renascuntur in Deum) are baptized unto God, *infants*, and *little ones*, and children, and youths, and elder persons."*

The only objection to this testimony is, that Irenæus here expresses baptism by a word which literally denotes *regeneration*, putting, by a common figure, the thing signified for the sign. That he really intended to express baptism by this word, is evident from his use of it in other instances. "When Christ gave his apostles the command of *regenerating unto God*, he said, Go and teach all nations, *baptizing* them."—This mode of expression was common in the primitive church. Justin Martyr, describing the manner in which persons were admitted to the church, says: "They are regenerated in the same way of regeneration in which we are regenerated; for they are *washed with water*, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." Dr. Wall, who better understood the phraseology of the early Christian writers in relation to this subject than any author with whom I am acquainted, says: "Any man, who has been at all conversant with the Fathers, will be satisfied that they as constantly meant *baptized* by the word *regenerated*, as we mean the same by the word *christened*." Accordingly, he does not hesitate to speak of the passage above cited from Irenæus as an "*express mention* of baptized infants." Whiston a learned Baptist, admits the same. "This," says he, "is a *thing undeniable*, by any modest arguer."†

* In Wall's Hist. of In. Baptism, Part i. Chap. 1—3.

† In Wall's Defence, p. 41.

Tertullian was cotemporary with Irenæus, though a little later. His testimony on the subject before us is as follows: "They whose office it is to administer baptism should know that it is not to be given rashly." Therefore, according to *every persons'* condition, and disposition, and age, the delay of baptism is more profitable, especially in the case of *little children*. For why is it necessary that the sponsors should incur danger? For they may either fail of their promises by death, or may be disappointed by a child's proving to be of a wicked disposition. Our Lord indeed says, *Forbid them not to come to me.* Let them come, then, when they are grown up; when they understand; when they are taught whither they are to come. Let them become Christians, when they are able to know Christ. *Why should their innocent age make haste to baptism?* Men act more cautiously in temporal concerns. Worldly substance is not committed to those to whom divine things are entrusted. Let them know how to ask for baptism, that you may seem to give to him that asketh.—It is for a reason of *no less importance*, that *unmarried persons*, both those who were never married, and those who have been deprived of their partners, should, on account of their exposure to temptation, be kept waiting, till they are either married, or confirmed in a habit of continency. They who understand the importance of baptism, will be more afraid of hastening to receive it, than of delay."*

It cannot be doubted that the children spoken of in this passage were literally infants. They are called (parvulos) *little children;* were brought by sponsors; and are represented throughout as not yet arrived to years of understanding. Neither can it be doubted, in view of the above testimony, that it was in the days of Tertullian,

* De Baptismo, Cap. xviii.

within a hundred years of the Apostles, a *general custom*, sustained as was supposed by *the command of Christ*, to bring such children to baptism. Tertullian evidently speaks of it as a general custom, and quotes the injunction of our Lord. 'Forbid them not to come unto me,' as having reference to it. But then he advises a delay. Why? Not because he thought infant baptism unauthorized, or an innovation; this is not intimated: But because of certain erroneous opinions which he entertained in regard to the mystical efficacy of baptism. He supposed that with baptism was connected the forgiveness of sins; and that sins committed after baptism were next to unpardonable. He therefore urged, that "to *every one's* condition, disposition, and age, the delay of baptism is more profitable; especially in the case of *little children*," and "*unmarried persons*." He advised that *all persons* should delay baptism, till they were either brought to the verge of the grave, or were in some way released from the temptations of life.*

With the absurd *opinions* of this father, we have nothing to do. It is merely as a *witness to a fact* that he is introduced. And there is no father whose testimony, as to *the general practice of infant baptism in the primitive age*, is more convincing than that of Tertullian. He was an honest but fanciful, whimsical writer; embraced many strange and peculiar notions; and was finally ejected from the communion of the church.

Cotemporary with Tertullian was Clement of Alexandria. In the following passage from his writings, we have a striking allusion to the baptism of children by the

* In the third and fourth century, this delay of baptism prevailed to an alarming extent. "Men lived in sin," says Milner, "as long as they thought they could safely, and deferred baptism till their near approach to death, under the groundless hope of washing away all their guilt at once." Ecc. Hist. Vol. ii. p. 276.

Apostles, which he seems to think was ordinarily performed by immersion. He is giving directions respecting the rings to be worn on the fingers of Christians, and the seals suitable to be engraven on them, and says: "Let your seal be a Dove, or a fish, or a ship under sail, or a harp, or an anchor (which Saleneus made his choice;) and if any one be a fisherman, let him think of *an Apostle, and the children taken from the water.*"* He recommends the figure of an Apostle baptizing a little child, as a suitable one to be engraved.

Origen was born A. D. 185, or 85 years after the Apostles. His testimony to the baptism of infants is direct and convincing. "According to the usage of the church, baptism is given (etiam parvulis) even *to infants;* when if there were nothing in infants which needed forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would seem to be superfluous."

Again: "Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins? Or when have they sinned? Or can there be any reason for the laver in their case, unless it be according to the sense mentioned above, that no one is free from pollution, though he has lived but one day upon earth; and because by baptism native pollution is taken away, therefore *infants are baptized.*"

Still again: "*The church received a tradition from the Apostles to give baptism even to infants.*"†

Respecting the traditions of the Apostles and the practice of the church, Origen had the best possible means of information; for his grandfather, or at most his great grandfather (both of whom were Christians) must have been cotemporary with the Apostles themselves. Besides; he was one of the most learned men of his time; had travelled in various countries; and was acquainted with

* Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. Part i. Chap. 3.

† Hom. viii. on Lev. 12; Hom. on Luke 14; and Com. on Rom. Lib. 5.

the usages of Christians throughout the world. He not only makes mention of infant baptism, but *argues from it* in proof of original sin. His argument would have had no weight, had infant baptism been a new or questionable practice.

There is no escaping from the testimony of Origen, but by depreciating Ruffinus's translation of his works. But some of the passages usually quoted from Origen have no connexion with this translation. They are taken, in part from a translation by Jerome, and in part from the original Greek. The authenticity of the passages above cited has been satisfactorily vindicated by Dr. Wall.*

I shall next adduce the testimony of Cyprian and the Council of Carthage. Cyprian was for a short time cotemporary with Origen. The Council of Carthage over which he presided, was convened A. D. 253, or 153 years subsequent to the Apostles. This Council consisted of sixty-six bishops, who were called together to determine, among other things (so prevalent was the idea that baptism had come in the place of circumcision,) whether it was lawful to administer baptism to infants before they were eight days old. The following passage is from the Letter of the Bishops, or what would now be called the Result of the Council:

"Cyprian and the rest of the bishops who were present in Council, sixty-six in number, to Fidust our brother greeting."—"As to the case of infants,—whereas you judge that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born, and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed; *we were all of a very different opinion. Not one was of your mind*, but we all rather judged that the mercy and grace of God is to be denied to no hu-

* Defence, pp. 372—383. Jerome testifies expressly that Origen held to infant Baptism.

† The name of the Bishop who proposed the question.

man being that is born."—"This, therefore, dear brother, was our opinion in the Council, that we ought not to hinder any person from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful and kind to all. And this rule, as it holds for all, is, we think, *more especially to be observed in reference to infants, even to those newly born.*"

"Here," says Mr. Milner, "is an assembly of sixty-six pastors, men of approved fidelity and gravity, who had stood the fiery trial of some of the severest persecutions ever known; who had testified their love to the Lord Jesus in a more striking manner than any Anti-Pedobaptists have had an opportunity of doing in our days; and who seem not to be wanting in any fundamental of godliness. Before this assembly a question is brought, not whether infants should be baptized—*none contradicted this*,—but whether they should be baptized immediately, or on the eighth day. To a man they determine *to baptize them immediately*. Let the reader consider."*

Among these pastors, there were some, undoubtedly, who were advanced in age; whose ancestors had lived in the first century, and were well acquainted with the practice of the Apostles. If infant baptism were an innovation, is it possible to conceive that not one of these men should be acquainted with the fact; or if acquainted with it, that none should have the fidelity to oppose the error?

In the Apostolical Constitutions, by some ascribed to Clement of Rome, and known to have been extant in the early ages of the Christian Church, it is said: "*Baptize your infants*, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."†

In the Questions and Answers to the Orthodox, an ancient work, which some have ascribed to Justin Martyr,

* Ecc. Hist. Vol. i. p. 402.

† Wall's Hist. of In. Baptism, Part i. pp. 426, 432.

we have the following passage: "The difference between those (*Βρεφη*) infants that have been baptized, and those that have not, will be, that the baptized will be made partakers of the blessings granted by baptism, and the unbaptized not. And those blessings are granted for the sake of the faith of those that bring them to baptism."*

About 260 years after the Apostles lived Optatus Milevitanus. Comparing Christ put on in baptism to a garment, he exclaims, "Oh! what a garment is this, which is always one, and which fits all ages and shapes. It is neither too large for *infants*, nor too small for young men, nor does it need any alteration for women."*

Basil the Great was cotemporary with Optatus, or perhaps a little earlier. Theodoret relates that he, "coming into the palace" (of Valens, an Arian), "and seeing the Emperor's child at the point of death, undertook that he would recover, if he had *baptism given him* by the hands of the godly; and having said this, he went away. But the Emperor gave order to some that were present of the faction of Arius to *baptize* (*το παιδιον*) the child."†

Gregory Nazianzen, in his Oration on Basil, represents him as having been consecrated to God, and carried to the baptismal font, in his *infancy*.—In his Oration on Baptism, Gregory reasons thus: "Hast thou an infant child? Let not wickedness have the advantage of time. Let him be sanctified from his infancy. Let him be dedicated from his cradle to the Spirit. Thou as a fainthearted mother and of little faith, art afraid of giving him *the seal*, because of the weakness of nature. *Give him the trinity*, that great and excellent preservative." ‡

Ambrose, who flourished 274 years after the Apostles, says: "Those (parvuli) *little children who are baptized*,

* Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. Part i. pp. 426, 432.

† Hist. Ecc. Lib. iv. Cap. 17.

‡ See Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. P. i. Chap. ii.

are reformed from a wicked state to the primitive state of their nature."

Again, having quoted the words of Christ, 'Unless *any one* is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,' he says: "You see that he excepts no one, *not even an infant.*"*

Chrysostom, who lived 280 years after the Apostles, says: "Some think that the heavenly grace (of baptism) consists only in forgiveness of sins: but I have reckoned up ten advantages of it. For this cause *we baptize infants*, though they are not defiled with sin" (or, as Augustine has quoted it from the Greek of Chrysostom, "though they have not any actual sins") "that there may be superadded to them saintship, righteousness, adoption, inheritance," &c.*

Jerome, who was cotemporary with several of the fathers last quoted, says: "The children of Christians are not themselves only under the guilt of sin, if they do not receive baptism;" but "the wickedness is also imputed to those who would not give it them."*

Augustine (or Austin) flourished 288 years after the Apostles, and is styled by Milner "the great luminary" of the age in which he lived. His testimony in favor of infant baptism, as having been handed down from the Apostles, is express and abundant.—In his book against the Donatists, speaking of the efficacy of baptism where faith, by necessity, is wanting, he says: "This, the whole body of the church holds, as delivered to them (cum parvuli infantes baptizantur) *in the case of little infants who are baptized*, who certainly cannot believe with the heart unto righteousness; and yet no Christian will say they are baptized in vain."

In his book on Genesis, Augustine says: "The custom of our mother, the church, in *baptizing infants* must not

* Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. Part i. Chap. 13, 14, 15.

be disregarded, nor accounted useless; and it must by all means be believed to be (apostolica traditio) a *tradition of the Apostles.*"

Again, he says, that infant baptism "came not by any general council, or by any authority later or less than *that of the Apostles.*"

Still again, he speaks of baptizing infants "by the authority of the whole church, which was undoubtedly delivered by *our Lord and his Apostles.*"

And finally he says: "I do not remember that I ever *heard* any other thing from any Christians that received the Old and New Testament, neither from such as were of the Catholic church, nor from such as belonged to any sect or schism; I do not remember that I ever *read* otherwise in any writer that I could find treating of these matters, who followed the canonical Scriptures, or pretended to do so," "*that infants are not baptized* for that reason, viz. that *they may receive remission of sins.*"*

Pelagius and Celestius flourished at the same time with Augustine. They were distinguished for their acuteness and learning, and had personally visited nearly every part of the Christian world. They were the founders and promoters of the noted Pelagian heresy. They denied the doctrine of original sin. In opposition to the errors of these men, the whole Orthodox church, with Augustine at its head, constantly and victoriously urged the baptism of infants: "*Why are infants baptized for the remission of sins, if they have none?*" With this argument, Pelagius and his abettors were much embarrassed; and had recourse to a variety of evasions in order to escape from it. Sometimes they affirmed, that infants had *actual* sins, which needed forgiveness;—sometimes, that they had *pre-existed*, and that it was for sins

* See Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. Vol. i. pp. 187—302.

committed in some former state that they were brought to baptism;—sometimes they said that infants *were not baptized for the forgiveness of sins*, but that they might be sanctified;—and sometimes, that they *were baptized for forgiveness*, not that they had any sin, but because they were baptized into a church where forgiveness was to be had: To such straits were these learned heresiarchs reduced, in order to reconcile their opinions with the baptism of infants. How easily had all their difficulties been removed, and the battery which so much annoyed them been demolished at once, by simply denying that infants were to be baptized. So strong were their temptations to make such a denial, that Pelagius complained at one time of its being slanderously reported that he had made it. It is morally certain that he would have made it, if, with all his learning, and in his various travels, he had discovered the slightest evidence to justify him in such a course. Yet he never did make it. On the contrary, he asserts the right of infants to baptism in the strongest terms. "Baptism," says he, "*ought to be administered to infants* with the same sacramental words which are used in the case of adult persons." Again: "Men *slander* me, as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants." And again: "*I never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants.* For who can be so impious, as to hinder infants from being baptized, and born again in Christ, and so make them miss of the kingdom of God?"

The language of Celestius, his coadjutor, is equally decisive. "As for infants, I *always said* they stand in need of baptism, and ought to be baptized."* The testimony of these men, considering the circumstances under which it was given, is in the highest degree convincing and satisfactory.

* See Wall's Hist. of In. Bap. Vol. i. pp. 62, 356—370.

To these testimonies from the early Christian writers, it should be added, that Catalogues of all the different sects of professing Christians in the four first centuries (the very period when infant baptism must have been introduced, if it were not of divine original) were carefully written, and are still extant.* "In these catalogues, the differences of opinion which obtained in those respecting baptism are particularly recounted and minutely designated. Some sects are mentioned which made no use of water baptism; and the different ways in which baptism was administered by different sects are distinctly described. Yet there is no mention of any except those who denied water baptism altogether, who did not consider infant baptism as a divine institution."

It would be useless to multiply testimonies from ancient writers, or to trace the history of infant baptism to a later period than that to which we have now arrived; as it is indisputable that, for the next five hundred years, this practice universally prevailed. Dr. Wall, who has so thoroughly investigated the subject as to leave little to be done by those who come after him, assures us, that the first body of men, of which he can find any account, who denied baptism to infants, were the Petrobrussians (the followers of Peter de Bruys) a sect of the Albigenses, who appeared in the former part of the twelfth century. And Milner says that, "a few instances excepted, the existence of anti-Pedobaptism seems scarcely to have taken place in the church of Christ, till a little after the beginning of the reformation."†

In opposition to the mass of testimony which has been given, as to the practice of the church in the first four centuries, it is idle to bring forward the opinions of cer-

* The authors of these Catalogues were Irenæus, Epiphanius, Philastrius, Augustine, and Theodoret. See Wall's Hist. P. i. Chap. xxi.

† See Appendix, Note J.

tain modern writers, that "in primitive times none were baptized but adults." Such opinions have no weight with us; and ought to have none with any person. We have the means of examining the subject for ourselves; and have as much reason to believe, as we have to believe anything on the testimony of history, that in the early ages of the Christian church, infant baptism, so far from being unknown, was a universally approved and established custom.

It has been said, by way of objection, that there are instances of persons—as Jerome, Gregory, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Constantine the great—who were born of Christian parents, but who were not baptized but upon their own profession. It will appear, however, on examination, that not one of these instances is in point. "With respect to Jerome," says Dr. Wall, "there is no evidence that he was not baptized in his infancy." The father of Gregory was a determined and bitter enemy to Christianity, till his son, probably, had become of age. He belonged to a "sect," says Milner, "most resembling the Samaritans, who professed a mixture of Judaism and Paganism. To this opinion he was *extremely devoted*," and was not converted to the Christian faith till many years subsequent to his marriage. He would, without doubt, prohibit the baptism of his son in infancy.* As to Ambrose and Chrysostom, their parents, according to Dr. Wall, were heathens, at the time of their birth, and for many years afterwards.† That the father of Augustine was a Christian is not pretended; and that his mother was not a Christian by profession, till he had passed the period of childhood, is certain from his own words. For he says of her, that when he was learning oratory at Carthage, "she had *lately* begun to feel God's holy

* See Milner's Ecc. Hist. Vol. ii. pp. 272, 309.

† Hist. of In. Bap. Part ii. Chap. iii.

love, and had been washed in the laver of baptism."* Of Constantine, Eusebius says, that he "was the only one of all those that ever were emperors, who was perfected by baptism."† Consequently, his father, though a friend to the Christians, could not have been by profession of their number.

The case of *infant communion* is often brought forward, as completely invalidating the argument from history in favor of infant baptism.—It is true, that in some churches infant communion has been practised, and by some persons it has been advocated, both in ancient and modern times. "In Cyprian's time," says Wall, "the people of the church of Carthage did oftentimes bring their children *younger than had been ordinary* to the communion."‡ Or, as another expresses it; they were accustomed "to give a piece of the bread soaked in wine to children and the sick."‖ In later periods, when, from a perversion of our Saviour's words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," it was believed that a partaking of the supper was essential to salvation, infant communion more generally prevailed. It is mentioned by Photius, Augustine, and Paulinus, and continues to be practised among the Greeks to the present day. "They crumble the consecrated bread into the wine, take it out with a spoon," and put it into the mouths of infants.‖

If infant baptism were founded on mere historical evidence; and if this evidence were as clear in favor of infant communion as of infant baptism; the two practices would then stand on equal ground. But neither of these suppositions is founded in truth. The *baptism* of infants

* See Milner's Ecc. Hist. Vol. ii pp. 272, 309.
† Life of Constantine, Lib. iv. Cap. 12.
‡ Hist of In. Bap. Part ii. Chap. 9.
‖ Witsius' Econ. of Cov. Vol. iii. p. 432.

rests upon the Scriptures. The *communion* of infants, to say the most of it, receives no countenance from Scripture. Nor is the argument from history, in the two cases, by any means equal. We have clear intimations of infant baptism in the Apostolic age. We have no intimations of infant communion, till the middle of the third century. It appears that infant baptism was *universally* practised in the Christian church. We have no evidence that infant communion ever was universal. The fathers speak confidently of infant baptism, that it came from the Apostles. Those who make mention of infant communion never speak of it, that I can learn, after this manner. In short, infant baptism bears decisive marks of a divine original. Infant communion is manifestly an innovation in the church. On what grounds, then, can infant communion be urged, as invalidating the argument in favor of infant baptism?

Without doubt, all the churches planted by the Apostles were established upon the same plan. Either they all baptized infants, or they all rejected them. And the practice of the Apostles in this matter must have been universally and certainly known. All the Christians, among whom Paul travelled and preached, *knew* whether or not he and his companions baptized their children.

And if the Apostles and their coadjutors did not baptize children—if they established churches upon the plan of adult baptism only; at what period, I ask, was infant baptism introduced? And how must the persons who first attempted to introduce it have been received? "Would not all their brethren," says an eloquent writer,* whose language I shall freely use, "immediately cry out upon them, and demand, 'By what *authority* do you presume to perform this new, this unheard of, and strange

* Mr. Towgood.

ceremony of baptizing an infant?' Suppose the innovators to have urged in support of their practice the same Scriptures which we now urge, would it not presently have been replied upon them with unanswerable strength, 'Did not the Apostles and first preachers of Christianity understand the true sense and force of these Scriptures? Yet we all perfectly know, and you cannot but own, that not one of them ever baptized an infant. Look into all the churches throughout the earth, and you will find that there never was such a thing known or heard of before amongst Christians.'

"What, under these circumstances, could the first baptizers of infants possibly reply? Could they think to justify themselves on the ground of Apostolic injunction and practice? But every Christian then living could have stepped forth, and borne witness to the falsehood of such a pretence. Or could they hope to establish this invention of their own, and was it actually established, in direct *opposition* to Apostolic authority? Impossible to imagine! What then, I ask again—(if all the churches in the world were constituted by the Apostles upon a directly opposite plan)—what could the first baptizers of infants urge in favor of their practice? And how was it possible it should be received and prevail, yea, so *universally* prevail, that the learned and acute Pelagius, about three hundred years after, had never heard of a church, amongst either Catholics or heretics, which did not administer baptism to infants?

"Could we suppose a *few persons* of so singular a disposition, as to run into this novel and unheard of practice, can it be imagined that *whole churches* would be led blindly away after them? Or if whole churches might be thus seduced, could *whole nations* be so too? Or if whole nations might, can it enter into the heart of any reasonable being, that *all* the nations of the Christian world

should, in the course of a few years, fall in entirely with this anti-Apostolic and newly invented ceremony of religion, and apostatize from the primitive and pure doctrine of Christ?

"The extravagance of the supposition is greatly increased, by remembering that the church was early divided into a number of sects, which were severe and watchful spies upon each other's conduct. If any of them had innovated in the matter of baptizing infants, how loudly would the rest have exclaimed upon the innovation! But so far, it seems, were they from this, that laying aside their prejudices and animosities, they all surprizingly agree, in respect to infant baptism, to depart from the Apostolic practice, and by an unaccountable confederacy, connive at one another in this dangerous superstition! Strange, beyond all belief, that amidst their mutual accusations, reproaches and complaints, we meet not, in all antiquity, with one upon this head!"

I could more easily account (unaccountable as it may be) for the introduction and universal spread of infant baptism in two or three centuries, than I could for its prevalence without *altercation* and *controversy* among Christians. Large bodies of men never change either their sentiments or practice all at once, without disputes. "And if infant baptism had been an innovation, a corruption of one of the special ordinances of the gospel, it would not have been introduced in the early days of Christianity, without commotions, controversies, and divisions. But, strange to tell, the pen of history has not transmitted to us the least intimation of any controversy about it; though it has furnished us with catalogues of all the heresies, and has recorded a dispute of far less consequence, respecting the proper *time* of baptizing infants!"

The argument, therefore, comes to this: If infant bap-

tism is an innovation, it confessedly entered the church soon after the canon of Scripture closed; and in a few years more, "without a single precept to warrant or an example to encourage it, yea, with the well known practice of the Apostles, and of all the churches they planted, directly, openly, palpably against it,—under all these disadvantages it so universally prevailed, that upon the face of the whole earth there was not a church found, where it was not practised!" Yea more, it entered the church, prevailed, and became universal, without a whisper of opposition,* without a word of dispute, all parties agreeing to connive at the error, to blot every trace of its origin from the page of history, and never to utter a single word from which it could be discovered that they were conscious of having departed from gospel rules! To him who believes this, what can be incredible!

Is it not, then, *morally certain*, that infant baptism is not an innovation in the church, but was sanctioned by the Apostles themselves? On this ground, and this only, "all sacred and profane history, relating to the subject, appears plain and consistent, from Abraham to Christ, and from Christ to this day."

* I make this assertion, with a perfect recollection of the testimony of Tertullian. He did not consider infant baptism as *new* or *unauthorized*, but merely advised to delay it, as he did that of unmarried persons, on the ground of expediency.

PART III.

ON THE IMPORT, DESIGN, AND USES OF INFANT BAPTISM.

In the foregoing pages, I have endeavored to vindicate the propriety of Infant Baptism, and to show that it is of divine institution. But if this rite *is* of divine institution, it doubtless has a meaning,—which may be gathered from the Scriptures, and which ought to be distinctly understood. Until it is understood, the duties growing out of it will not be discovered, and consequently will not be performed.

Besides; the covenants of our churches often require, not only that parents bring their children to baptism, but that they "instruct them in the nature, use, and end of that ordinance." But how shall parents perform this duty, and fulfil this important part of their covenant engagements, unless they are themselves *instructed*, as to "the nature, use, and end" of the ordinance in question?

This subject assumes additional importance from the manner in which it has been hitherto treated. I speak according to my most sincere convictions when I say, that no subject of equal claims, within the whole circle of Christian theology, has been so much neglected as this. And when it has been discussed, it has not been, in all instances, in the most happy manner. The labors of some have tended rather to involve it in mystery, and thus guard it against the exceptions of Baptists, than to open the real sense of Scripture, and afford satisfaction to impartial minds.

It may be remarked further, by way of introduction, that this subject is one in which Pedobaptists alone are *directly* interested. Until our brethren of other denominations admit the *propriety* of administering baptism to children, they can have no particular interest in ascertaining the import of the transaction, or the relation of baptized children to the church of Christ.

It has been observed, in a former part of this work, that baptism, like circumcision, is both a *sign* and a *seal*.* As a *sign* it is significant of important truths. As a *seal*, it is connected with a covenant, involving duties to be performed, and promising important blessings. This is true of baptism generally; and it is equally true of baptism when applied to children.

It will be necessary to contemplate infant baptism in the twofold view which has been here presented.

And, first, as a *sign*. What is *signified* in the baptism of children? What *facts*, what *truths*, is the ordinance calculated to teach and impress?

1. It plainly teaches that infants are *moral* beings, and capable of receiving spiritual blessings.—Some there are, who regard infants as mere animals, without intellectual immortal souls, and having no moral capacities more than the brutes. But if infants are without intellectual and moral capacities, without souls; why are they

* "He (Abraham) received the *sign* of circumcision, a *seal* of the righteousness of faith," &c. Rom. iv. 11. Lightfoot says, that the Jews have always considered circumcision as both a *sign* and a *seal*; and that when in the act of circumcising a child, the administrator was instructed to say, "Blessed be he who hath sanctified you, beloved from the womb, and hath placed the *sign* in your flesh, and *hath sealed* our sons with the *seal* of his holy covenant." Horae Hebraicae on Matt. xxviii. 19.

The Christian Fathers were accustomed to represent baptism as a *seal*. Hermas, speaking of "the seal of the Son of God," says, (illud autem sigillum aqua est) "but that *seal is water*." Gregory Nazianzen, reproving a mother for delaying to baptize her child, says: "Thou art afraid of giving him *the seal*." Wall's Hist. of In. Baptism, Part i. Chapters 1 and 11.

baptized? What propriety in baptizing a mere animal? And for such an application of the ordinance, what meaning or reason could be assigned?

When our Saviour was upon earth, little children were brought to him that they might receive his blessing. But can we suppose that he would have suffered *mere animals* to be brought to him in this way? Would he have laid his hands on little animals without souls, and prayed over them, and pronounced them blessed, and said that "of such is the kingdom of God?"—It is certain from the transaction here referred to, that infants have immortal souls;—that they are *moral* beings, capable of receiving spiritual blessings, and are to be regarded and treated in this light. And whenever we see a child presented for baptism, we have a visible manifestation of this interesting truth. God is here virtually assuring us, that in the breast of the seemingly unconscious infant there is a flame lighted up which is to burn forever. He is assuring us, that the little subject of baptism, though at present feeble and helpless, is capable, in the progress of its being, of unbounded attainments in holiness and bliss; and is capable *even now*, of being brought into a covenant relation to God, and becoming an heir of eternal life.

2. We see in the baptism of infants that they are *depraved* beings.—It is not necessary here to go into any discussion respecting the nature of human depravity. Whether this attaches to something in the constitution of the soul, or only its exercises, or whether there is any other sense in which we may be said to be depraved, I design not now to inquire. Evangelical Christians have always held to *native* as well as total depravity; and this melancholy truth is clearly taught in the baptism of infants. *Why are they baptized for the remission of sins, if they have none?* was the triumphant interrogation of

Augustine to Pelagius? And the question is equally pertinent, and equally unanswerable, now as then. The application of water is a fit and appointed emblem of purification. But why purify that which is not defiled? Why apply baptismal water to those who are not in any way the subjects of moral pollution?

Some there are, who call infant children "little innocents;" and think them fit subjects of baptism, because they are innocent. But if they are innocent, they need no spiritual cleansing, no purification; and why should the symbol of purification be applied to them?—The language of infant baptism, however humiliating to proud nature, is too plain to be easily perverted or misunderstood: 'Your children are polluted; they are depraved from their birth; they need to be regenerated, to be spiritually cleansed and purified; and it is on this account, and not because they are innocent, that the symbol of purification is applied to them.'

3. The baptism of infants, like that of adults, sets forth *the cleansing of the soul from sin* "by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." This ordinance does not indeed import, that all those to whom it is applied *are actually cleansed;* but that there is cleansing for them in the gospel, and that this is to be effected through the special operations of the Holy Spirit. "Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins.*" Acts xxii. 16. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and *cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.*" Eph. v. 25. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and *ye shall be clean.*" Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

Whenever we see a little child presented for baptism, we have a striking illustration of the glorious truth, that though we are polluted from our birth, still there is cleansing for us in the gospel. There is the "blood of

sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel." There is an almighty Spirit, by the shedding forth of whose influence the darkened mind may be enlightened, the stubborn will bowed, the depraved heart purified, and the whole soul transformed into a meetness for heaven.

4. The baptism of an infant is calculated to impress on all who witness it, that the cleansing, the healing, and salvation of the gospel are *entirely gratuitous*. In the case of a little child, these blessings *must be* gratuitous. What has he done to merit them? What can he do? But, says our blessed Saviour, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God *as a little child*, he shall not enter therein." The adult person "who receives the kingdom, must receive it on the same terms as the child; —not for a life of virtue,—not for his faith, his repentance, his obedience, as if these could merit any thing from God. He must, as to the ground of his title to spiritual blessings, be divested of every thing.—Now this is one of the essential articles of gospel truth; one of the immutable laws of Christ's kingdom; one of the indispensable characteristics of his genuine subjects. And this truth is constantly exhibited, and affectingly impressed, in infant baptism. Every time the ordinance is administered to a child, all who witness it may be considered as having the words of Christ symbolically repeated in their ears: "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven *as a little child*, he shall not enter therein.' It is not the fault of the ordinance, but of its administrator and witnesses, if such impressions are not made."

5. Infant baptism is a significant *token of discipleship*, affixed to those who are early consecrated to Christ, and pledged to him as his future followers. "All societies need some mark of distinction, by which the members

shall be known to each other; so that each individual shall feel, that he is himself required, and may justly require others, to perform the duties incumbent on him, and them, as members of the fraternity. This sign ought to be publicly known, to be definite, unequivocal, solemn, significant, established by authority, and acknowledged by all the members. The power of such a sign, to unite the members in affection, in a common interest, and in corresponding pursuits, is very great." Now the sign of discipleship in the school of Christ is *baptism:* and our gracious Master has provided, that it shall be affixed, not only to his actual followers, but to their children. He has required that little children should be brought to him for his blessing, committed to his guidance, and pledged and devoted to his care and service; and that the token of discipleship should be placed upon them. In this view, what an interesting spectacle is the baptism of a child! A little immortal, just placed in the hands of its earthly guardians, is publicly resigned back to the guardianship of Christ; and he is represented as taking it into a covenant relation to himself, and fixing upon it the token of his faithfulness and love!

Having thus contemplated infant baptism as a *sign*, and glanced at some of the great truths which it is fitted to teach and impress; let us, secondly, consider it as a *seal.*

A *seal* is an appendage to a covenant; and implies the existence of a covenant.* Baptism, in the case of an adult, is the seal of a covenant between God and the person receiving it. It seals his engagements to be the Lord's, and seals to him the divine promises of justification and salvation.

* In the word *seal*, as here used, and as used by the Apostle, Rom. iv. 11, there is an allusion, says Professor Stuart, "to the practice of confirming written instruments (contracts or covenants) by *seals* placed on them in token of ratification." Comment. in loc.

Baptism, in the case of an infant, is not the seal of a covenant between God and the infant; for the infant is incapable of personally entering into covenant, or of engaging in any covenant transaction;—but baptism, in this case, is *the seal of a covenant between God and the parent, respecting the child.*

If we look into the Bible, we shall find this covenant, in *both parts* of it;—its *promises*, and its *requisitions*. It is in fact no other than *the covenant of the church—the covenant with Abraham.* God promises Abraham, in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and *thy seed after thee*, to be a God to thee, and to *thy seed after thee.*" We find similar promises in every part of the Bible. "I will pour my Spirit upon *thy seed*, and my blessing upon *thine offspring.*" "They are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and *their offspring with them.*" Is. xliv. 3; lxv. 23. "The promise is to you, and *to your children.*" Acts ii. 39.

It is indubitable, from these passages, that the *promises* of the covenant extend to the children of believers. They extend to them as truly as to their parents. God promises to be the God of the one, as really as of the other.

It will be observed, however, that these are *covenant* promises, and are connected with requirements to be fulfilled on the other part. There are requirements for the believer to fulfil in respect to *himself*, or he is entitled to no promise. He must endure to the end, or he has no promise of salvation. He must be faithful unto death, or he has no promise of a crown of life.

So there are requirements for the believing parent to fulfil in respect to *his children*, or he is entitled to no promise for them. "*Walk before me, and be thou perfect*, ... and I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and *thy seed after thee*, to be a God unto

thee, and to *thy seed after thee.*" "I know Abraham, that *he will command his children and his household after him*, and *they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.*" "Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God is the faithful God, keeping covenant and mercy *with them that love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.*" "When thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and *shalt obey his voice, according to all that I command thee this day* . . . . . : the Lord thy God *shalt circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed.*" "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that *they should make them known to their children*, ... *that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.*" "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and *his righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.*" "*The generation of the upright shall be blessed.*" "The just man *walketh in his integrity;* and *his children are blessed after him.*" "*Train up a child in the way he should go*, and when he is old, *he will not depart from it.*"*

From these passages, out of the many which might be quoted, the import of the covenant may be gathered. God promises to be the God of believers, if they will be faithful to themselves; and he promises to be the God of their children, if they will be faithful to them. If they will walk before him and be perfect, he promises to establish his covenant with them, to be a God to them and to their seed. If they will command their children and their households after them, he promises that they shall keep

* Gen. xvii. 1, 7; xviii. 19. Deut. vii. 9; xxx. 6. Ps. lxxviii. 5, 7; ciii. 17, 18; cxii. 2. Prov. xx. 7; xxii. 6.

the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment. If they and their posterity will continue in his love, he promises that his mercy shall descend from parents to children, even to a thousand generations. If they will return unto the Lord and obey his voice, according to all that he commands them; he promises to circumcise the heart of their seed, that they may love him with all the heart. If they will make known unto their children the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and the wonderful works that he has done, he promises that they shall set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. If they will keep his covenant, and remember his commandments to do them, he promises that his righteousness shall descend to their children's children. If they will sustain consistently the character of the upright, their generation shall be blessed. If they will be just and walk in their integrity, their children shall be blessed after them. If they will train them up in the way they should go, when they are old they will not depart from it. Or to sum up these various Scriptural representations, *if covenanting parents will be faithful to their children, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; he promises to bestow upon them converting grace, and to be their God and portion in this world and forever.*

Such is the obvious meaning of the covenant of the church in respect to children;—a meaning, not put upon it for the purpose of sustaining a favorite hypothesis, but shining forth from all the Scriptures relating to the subject. When the believing parent enters into this covenant, he engages to be faithful to his children, and *seals* the engagement in their baptism.

Such, then, is the import of infant baptism, as a *seal.* It is the seal of a covenant between God and the parent. It is a visible confirmation of this covenant by both the parties concerned in it. God virtually and most gra-

ciously addresses the parent in this transaction, and says, 'I will be a God to your child, if you will be faithful to it.' And the parent responds, 'I engage to be faithful to the child. I here publicly give it up to thee, and promise to train it up for thee.'

From the view here taken, the relation of the baptized infant to *the church* is very obvious. It is not, indeed, at present, an actual church member: Still, it holds an important place in the covenant of the church. Both the promises and requisitions of the covenant have respect to it. The parent consecrates the child to Christ, and promises to train it up for him according to covenant. And God says, 'This do, and your child shall live.' This do, and your child is secured to Christ and the church forever.'

It may be asked here, whether the covenant of the church in respect to children, demands *entire fidelity* of the parent; whether it is broken by every instance of improper treatment, by every failure in point of duty?—And in reply, I would ask, whether God does not demand entire fidelity in *all* his covenant dealings with men? In what covenant that he has ever made with them has he left them at liberty to sin? Could Abraham fall into sin, and not violate that covenant in which it was said, 'Walk before me, and be thou perfect?' Whenever the children of Israel fell into sin, were they not charged with violating covenant engagements? And is it not an aggravation of all the sins of God's people now, that they are offences, not only against the law of God, but against his covenant?

It is one thing, however, to come short of the *entire requisitions* of a covenant, and quite another, so to break it and trifle with it, as to lose all interest in its promised blessings. The former is often done by the professing people of God; the latter, it may be hoped, is of rare oc-

currence. It cannot be supposed that Abraham was *entirely perfect* with his children—that he performed all his duty towards them. Yet he obtained a promise in respect to them, that they should "keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment." The Israelites often failed of fulfilling the demands of God's covenant with them; yet it was long before they lost all interest in the covenant, and were finally rejected. And how is it with believers under the gospel? They are not perfect. They are often chargeable with sin. Still, they do not, with every sin, lose all interest in the covenant of grace. If they "repent of their sins, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance;" he graciously returns to them, and permits them to confide in his love.

Without doubt, the covenant, into which the believing parent enters respecting his children, requires him to be faithful to them. It can require no less. Neither is it likely that any parent in this life comes up to the full import of this requisition. The most watchful parent often sins, and fails of doing his whole duty to his children. Still, he may not so fail, and trifle with the obligations of the covenant, as to forfeit all interest in its blessings. If he is sensible of his failures, and mourns over them, and strives not to repeat them, and returns with new zeal to the performance of duty; God will not at once forsake him, and cut him off from his interest in the promises. The whole history of God's covenant dealings with men forbids such a supposition.*—The covenanting parent,

* "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers . . . . . then *will I remember my covenant* with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember, and I will remember the land." Lev. xxvi. 40—45. "They provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity; nevertheless, he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry, and *he remembered for them his covenant.*" Ps. cvi. 43—45. "Thou hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant; nevertheless, *I will remember my covenant with thee* in the days of thy youth." Ezek. xvi. 59, 60.

having once failed, may not be able to *demand* the entire fulfilment of the promises; but he may reasonably *hope* for their fulfilment, and this hope will be just in proportion to the degree of his penitence, and his future diligence in the performance of duty.

It may be objected to the principles established in the foregoing pages, that they make the salvation of children to depend rather on their parents, than on themselves; and represent those who are lost as condemned for their parents' iniquity, rather than their own.—But this objection arises entirely from misapprehension. The piety of children I suppose is connected in covenant with parental fidelity; but then, when they come to experience it, it is their own piety, and they are rewarded according to their own works. So the final impenitence and ruin of children are connected in many ways with the wickedness of parents. Still, the impenitence of such children is their own, and they are punished for their own sins.

It may be further objected, that, according to the representation which has been given, the relation of children to the Christian church is very different from their relation to the Jewish church.—But how were children connected with the Jewish church? Not by the possession of true holiness, for this they did not possess. Neither by having entered personally into the covenant of the church; for they were incapable in their infancy, as children now are, of any such personal transaction. So far as the church under the former dispensation possessed a *national* character, its constitution and the ground of connexion with it could not be the same as that which prevails under the gospel. But so far as this church was properly spiritual, it is believed that the relation of children to it did not differ materially from that which now subsists. I can conceive of no ground of spiritual relation to it, but that which has been explained;—parents,

entered into covenant respecting their children, and the Jehovah of Israel promised, on condition of parental fidelity, to be their God.*

The principles which have been established furnish ground for several important conclusions.

1. From what has been said of infant baptism, as a *seal*, it appears that it is most wisely adapted to secure the religious education and consequent conversion of the children of believing parents. This is, indeed, the great *object* and *end* of infant baptism; and the rite, as it has been explained, is fitted obviously, in the best manner, to secure it.

It is fitted to do this, by *reminding* covenanting parents of their duty to their children. Every time they look upon them, and behold the seal of God upon their foreheads, they are reminded of the engagements into which they have entered, and the duties which they have covenanted to perform.

Infant baptism is also fitted to *quicken* and *strengthen* parents in the performance of their duties. In this respect, it is not unlike a public profession of religion. A public profession imposes no new duties. The same religious duties, in general, are binding on all men, whether they make a profession or not. But a profession furnishes *new inducements* to the performance of duty, and *new strength* with which to resist the temptations to neglect it. So infant baptism imposes no new duties. All parents are bound to be faithful to their children, whether they baptize them or not. But by a public recognition of parental duties, and a solemn, sealed engagement to perform these duties, infant baptism greatly increases the motives in favor of their performance, and furnishes additional security that they will be performed.

* See Appendix, Note K.

The *promises of God*, too, will be a great encouragement to parents, in the difficult and responsible work of training up their children. Was it not an encouragement to Abraham, that God had promised to be the God of *his seed?* And should it not afford encouragement to the Christian parent, that this promise is still to him, and to his children? As he looks upon his beloved offspring, with an ever watchful anxiety for their spiritual good, will it not encourage and comfort him, that he may regard them as already the subjects of promise, and may humbly plead the provisions of God's gracious covenant on their behalf?

2. It appears from what has been said, that there is a propriety in administering baptism, not only to the natural children of believing parents, but to such as have been *adopted* by them, and with whose education they are entrusted. Infant baptism is the seal of a *covenant*, or of *mutual engagements*, entered into by God and the parent respecting the child. The engagement of the parent is in substance this: 'I will train up this child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.'

It is plain, that the parent may properly enter into such an engagement respecting his own children; and it is equally plain that he may enter into a like engagement in respect to any child or children whom he has adopted, or with whose education he is entrusted. With the utmost propriety, therefore, he may present such child or children before God and say, 'Here are the little ones whom thou, in thy righteous providence, hast committed to my care. I desire to yield them up to thee, and promise to train them up for thee. I desire to seal this promise in their baptism, and thus take hold of thy gracious covenant on their behalf.'

3. It may be inferred from the principles which have been established, that children are not entitled to baptism

on their parent's account *after they have passed the period of their minority.* As parents cannot with propriety engage to train up their children for God, *when they are already trained up;* so they cannot with propriety apply to them *the seal* of such an engagement. The period when children cease to be entitled to baptism on the account of their parents, is the period when they pass from under the control of their parents, and are no longer subject to their discipline and care.

4. From the view we have taken, it appears that the baptism of children furnishes no reason for their admission to the communion of the church, without a credible profession of piety.—In the opinion of some, when baptized children arrive at a certain age, and have passed what may be termed their religious minority, they are entitled, on the mere ground of their baptism, to the communion of the church. And if, at this or at any subsequent period, they request admission to communion; unless their lives are scandalously immoral, the church, it is said, have no right to refuse them. But opinions such as these are obviously the result of incorrect notions respecting the import of infant baptism, and the relation which it establishes between the child and the church. Baptism alone does not qualify any person for communion; nor will the baptized child, on the *mere* ground of his baptism, be at all more fitted, at any period of life, for the holy ordinance of the supper. Infant baptism is the seal of a covenant, in which the child is *promised to the church.* It seals engagements, which (if fulfilled) render it certain, that he will at some period be qualified for communion at the Lord's table. But *how* qualified? —Not by having arrived at a certain age, but by becoming a subject of converting grace. God promises his people, if they will give up their children to him, and train them up for him, that he will be their God and portion; —he will prepare them for his church on earth, and for

his kingdom in heaven; and when this promise begins to be fulfilled, and baptized children begin to believe with the heart and confess with the mouth the religion of the Son of God, then, and not before, may they with propriety become partakers of the memorials of his death.

5. It may be inferred from what has been said, that baptized children are not subject *directly* to the discipline of the church.—Some have supposed that, if the conduct of those who have been baptized becomes irregular, or if they long neglect to profess religion, the church is bound to interfere, and make them the subjects of direct ecclesiastical labor and discipline. But the view we have taken of the connexion between such children and the church, furnishes no ground for such a procedure.

The pious in our churches will, of course, feel a peculiar solicitude for the spiritual welfare of those who have been baptized. They will make frequent mention of them in their prayers; and if individuals are disposed to associate for the purpose of *united* prayer in regard to this object, and to strengthen one another's hands in the difficult work of training up their children; or if parents are disposed to assemble their children with the church, or to seek the advice and prayers of the church,—to measures such as these there can be no objection. On the contrary, they may be commendable and useful.—But all this comes far short of making baptized children the subjects of *direct* church discipline and censure. As such children have never personally entered into the covenant of the church, they have never placed *themselves* under its discipline. Nor have their parents placed them there. They have covenanted with God, and with with their brethren, that *they* would be faithful to their children, and train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; but they have never placed them di-

rectly under the watch and care of the church. Hence, the church have no right *directly* to interfere.

It is the right of the churches, and it is their duty, to watch over covenanting parents—to watch over them in respect to the manner in which they train up their children—and, in case of palpable default or negligence, to admonish, censure, or exclude, as the case may require. In this *indirect* manner, churches may extend their supervision to the conduct of baptized children. But to do more than this; to interfere with the government of families; and to endeavor, on their own responsibility, and by a direct application of discipline, to deal with and reclaim refractory children, it is believed they have no authority; and that to attempt it might be attended with the worst of consequences.

The opinion has been advanced, that when baptized children arrive at a certain age, if they neglect a public profession of religion, they ought to be admonished by the church; and if not brought to a satisfactory performance of duty, they ought to be publicly disowned and rejected. But such a procedure I must think both inexpedient and unwarranted. Baptized children are, indeed, connected with the church. Its covenant has respect to them; and God has promised, on condition of parental fidelity, that they shall one day be prepared for all the ordinances of his kingdom. But he has nowhere revealed at what period this promise shall be fulfilled. He may, in righteous judgment, delay it long. Or if the condition on which it is suspended is perseveringly trifled with, he may never fulfil it. It is impossible for the church to ascertain his designs, and it rather becomes them to wait upon him, in a humble and prayerful use of means, than rashly to disown and cast off those who are connected with them by the ordinance of baptism.

6. It is a recommendation of the views here exhibited,

that they open a plain, safe and easy path in respect to the treatment of baptized children. This cannot be said of all the *plausible* theories which have been advanced in relation to this subject. Some have led confessedly to such a mode of treatment as their abettors would not have dared to put in practice; and which, if it had been put in practice, must have produced unhappy results. But the views here advocated leave children, where God and nature designed they should be left, under the immediate direction and control of parents; while they bind parents, by motives the most powerful and engagements the most solemn, to do their duty. The parent may seek direction and aid from his brethren individually, or from the church as a body, or from any other source whence they can be obtained; but the care and control are primarily his. And he is in a sense responsible to God and the church, for the good education and consequent conversion of those entrusted to his hands.

7. From what has been said, it appears that infant baptism is not an unmeaning ceremony, but a very *significant and important ordinance*.—Those who reject this ordinance usually think and speak of it as a thing of no value. "It is a cause that produces no effect; a means connected with no end; a cloud that affords no rain; a tree that yields no fruit."*

But in view of what has been said, I must be allowed to ask, *Is this true?* Is infant baptism of no benefit as a *sign?* Is it not clearly significant of some of the most important spiritual "truths?" Where can we so plainly read, that *we are morally polluted beings from our birth;* that *we need cleansing;* that there is *cleansing for us in the gospel;* and that this (if bestowed at all) must come in a way of *mere grace*,—as in infant baptism? And is it of no benefit to the church and world, that Christ has

* Birt's Strictures, p. 10.

appointed a standing symbol, an ordinance, by which these, and the kindred important truths, are shadowed forth? Was it of no benefit to the church in the days of Pelagius, that she could appeal triumphantly to infant baptism, in opposition to the errors which then were broached? Is it of no advantage to the church, that she still retains the same argument?

But infant baptism is full of meaning and interest, not only as a sign, but as a seal. It is the seal of a solemn covenant between God and the parent. It binds the parent, by everything sacred, to be mindful of the spiritual interests of his children, and to do all in his power to train them up for heaven; and seals the consequent gracious promise, that God will be their portion forever. And now is not a covenant, so framed and sealed, calculated to have an important influence? Will not those parents who have sincerely entered into it be more likely (other things being equal) to engage, with persevering diligence, in the important work of religious education, than those who have made no such engagements?* And will not God remember his covenant, and bless their labors, and cause the fruits of them to appear in their children?

I am far from considering infant baptism as a saving ordinance, or from attaching to it any *mysterious efficacy* in the concern of salvation; but if it stands connected with the religious education of children, and brings them within the scope of the promises, in the manner we have seen; then baptized children may be expected to enjoy privileges beyond others, and will be more likely to become the objects of the divine favor and blessing. And this view of the case, I am confident is justified by facts. The church has been in a great measure perpetuated in the

*See Appendix, Note L.

line of children who have been religiously educated, and mostly in the line of those who have been circumcised, or baptized. A large proportion of those who have been converted and gathered into the churches in our own times, has been from among this class; and so it has been in all former periods. And when we consider the import of infant baptism, the promises sealed by it, and the influence which it ought to have on those parents who practice it; there is nothing strange in this. The wonder rather is, that such parents have not been more mindful of their covenant, and more devoted to the spiritual interests of their children,—that so the value of the rite in question might be more manifest, and the faithfulness of God in respect to it might more illustriously appear.

8. In view of what has been said, the responsibility of parents, who have given up their children to God in baptism, is very great. The charge committed to them is immense—the charge of *souls*. To them it is entrusted, in great measure, to form the characters and decide the destinies of their children, for time and eternity.

When you presented your children for baptism, Christian parents, you were regarded, not only as giving them to God, but as promising to train them up for him. When your covenant respecting them was sealed in baptismal water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, you were understood as binding yourselves, by the most solemn obligations, to make their conversion and final salvation the leading object of your lives. Remember, then, that this is a subject in regard to which you stand sacredly pledged. The vows of God are upon you, and you cannot go back. And why should you desire to go back? Have you bound yourselves to do more than your duty—more than the honor of God, and your own happiness, and the best interests of your children demand? No, Christian parent, you cannot think so. The covenant into which you have entered is perfect. Its require-

ments are strict, but, its promises are precious—too precious to be easily sacrificed and lost. Will you not, then, endeavor to be faithful? A thousand considerations are pressing upon you to be faithful. If you can consent to trifle with your own souls, do not trifle with the souls of those little immortal beings entrusted to your care. Neglect not to "feed daily, with oil from the sanctuary, those lights lighted for eternity, that they may burn with a pure and lovely radiance before the throne above." Neglect not to "cherish and cultivate those tender plants of immortality, bringing down upon them by prayer the dews and the rains of heaven, that they may flourish and bear fruit forever in the Paradise of God."

But you feel, perhaps, that you have been already unfaithful. On a review of the past, you see little else but imperfection. Your covenant has been often broken, and your obligations have been violated.—And what are your feelings, Christian parent, in view of this dark picture? Do you sincerely mourn over it? Do you feel disposed to humble yourself before God, and confess your sins, and implore forgiveness for the past, and resolve in the strength of Christ to be faithful in time to come? Can you in this way return to God, and take hold again of his holy covenant? If so, you may hope that God will return to you, and verify to you the promises of his grace? You may hope that the God of Abraham will not refuse to be your God, and that of your children.—But if you feel none of these relentings in view of past unfaithfulness; if you mean still to neglect duty and trifle with obligation, as you acknowledge you have done; then dark indeed is the prospect before you. Your broken vows must plead against you at the last, and the solemnities through which you have past with your children will be worse than in vain both to them and to you.

This subject should be an impressive one to *baptized*

children, especially to those who have arrived to years of understanding, and have not yet given their hearts to God. I shall take it for granted, my young friends, that your parents have done something more than merely to offer you in baptism;—that they have often told you of that solemn hour, when you were publicly consecrated to God, and his name was put upon you, and the covenant respecting you was ratified and sealed;—that they have kept this covenant in mind, and labored, in accordance with it, to train you up in a meetness for heaven. How great, then, have been your privileges! How great your consequent obligations. And how great your sin and guilt, if these obligations have not been fulfilled!—You may have trusted in your privileges, and felt that these were so great, that they could hardly fail to issue in your salvation. So did some of the inhabitants of those cities in which our Saviour most frequently preached, and in which most of his mighty works were done. But what said the benevolent Saviour to these favored but ungrateful cities? "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." Take care, my young friends, how you incur these fearful denunciations. Take care how you trifle with your privileges, lest it be more tolerable for Tyre, and Sidon, and Sodom, in the day of judgment than for you. Resisted light, and violated obligations,

and abused privileges, so far from doing you any good, can only aggravate your final condemnation. Your parents, I am willing to suppose, have endeavored to perform their duty towards you. But they never can repent and believe for you. They cannot have religion in your stead. Every thing is now depending, under God, upon yourselves. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it." Your parents have committed you into the hands of God; be willing to commit yourselves there. Take hold of the promises for yourselves, and enter personally into covenant with your Maker. Nothing short of this can save you; or can prevent your distinguished privileges from rising up in the judgment to condemn you.

I shall conclude this discussion with a few words to the churches. I have said that it is not the business of churches to interfere with the government of families, and take the discipline of children out of the hands of parents. The Bible nowhere makes this the duty of churches; it would be an objection to it, if it did.* But the churches are not to infer that there is nothing for them to do. It is their part to watch over covenating parents; and to take notice of the manner in which they perform their duty to their children. If such parents are ignorant, they should be instructed. If they have peculiar difficulties and trials, their hands should be strengthened and their hearts encouraged. Or if they are inexcusably negligent and unfaithful, they should be admonished and reclaimed, or else excluded. Their Christian brethren must not suffer sin upon them, and suffer duty to be openly neglected, in regard to this important matter.

The churches should feel a deep and peculiar interest in baptized children, and this interest should be mani-

* See Appendix, Note M.

fested in all proper ways. Especially should it be manifested in earnest and persevering prayer, that the God of grace would remember his covenant, have mercy upon them, and save their souls.

This subject should be one of particular interest to the churches at the present period. They are expecting great things of the rising generation. They are expecting a vast accession of members, to be taken chiefly from those now in the morning of life. It is high time, then, that the hearts of the fathers were turned to the children; and that the hearts of all professing Christians were engaged to seek the salvation of the young; that, when those now on the stage are summoned to leave it, a generation may rise up--not only to call them blessed—but to stand in their lot, and enter into their labors.

PART IV.

ON CLOSE COMMUNION.

Those Christians, who reject infant baptism, and contend for the exclusive validity of immersion in that ordinance, have, for the most part, confined their communion to persons of their own persuasion, considering those of other denominations as unbaptized. Their practice in this respect has been termed *close or strict communion;* while the opposite practice is styled *free, open, or mixed communion.*

I design, in the following pages, to offer some considerations in opposition to *close communion.* I would premise, however, that I entirely agree with the strict or Calvinistic Baptists in the sentiment that none but *professed believers in Christ*—who give creditable evidence of having been *regenerated* by the influences of the Holy Spirit—are entitled to communion at the sacred supper. Those only who give evidence of being *the children of God* are entitled to a seat at their Father's table. Those only who are prepared to enjoy *real, spiritual* communion with Christ and his people, are entitled to receive the the emblems of such communion. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"*

* Hence, in advocating what is sometimes called *open communion,* we cannot perceive that we justly expose ourselves to the charge of *latitudinarianism;*—a charge usually urged in this connexion.

But while I am thus confident in the persuasion that the sacrament of the supper is the *exclusive* property of those who give evidence of having been born of God, I am equally confident that it is the property of *all* of this character; and that to withhold it, as many do, from multitudes whom they acknowledge to be true Christians, is a proceeding which, however pure and kind may be their intentions, they are wholly unable to justify.

1. The practice of close communion is, in the first place, *unscriptural*.—There were differences of opinion in the apostolical churches, and some of them of as great importance as those now agitated between Baptists and Pedobaptists. Such, for instance, was the question respecting the obligation of practising circumcision, and observing the Jewish law. Yet neither party was tolerated in excluding or denouncing the other. So far from this, they were expressly exhorted to *receive one another*, on the ground of both being supposed to belong to Christ. "Wherefore *receive ye one another*, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." Rom. xv. 7. "Him that is weak in faith"—or whom ye esteem weak, he not being able to see things in the same light with yourselves—"*receive ye*, but not to doubtful disputations." 'Who art thou that judgest *another man's servant*, in respect to such matters? He is a *servant of Christ;* he is *in the faith;* he is conscientious in his opinion, as you are in yours; and why do you judge him? To his own Master he standeth or falleth. Let us not therefore judge one another any more.' See Rom. xiii. 1—13.

It will be said, perhaps, that the Apostle is here speaking of things *indifferent;* things not to be compared with the modern questions respecting baptism. But what are we to understand by 'things indifferent,' as this phraseology is here used? Not things of no importance, or about which the Apostle had formed no opinion; but

things which he regarded as *unessential to Christian character, and to final salvation;*—as the questions respecting baptism confessedly are. Paul certainly had formed an opinion in regard to the matters referred to in the above quotations, and he did consider them as of very considerable importance—important enough frequently to occupy his thoughts and his pen; but as he did not think them essential to Christian character, he was decided in affirming that they ought to be no bar in the way of Christian fellowship and communion.

It will be said, again, that those to whom the Apostle wrote were all baptized persons, members of the church; and consequently his directions to them are no evidence of the manner in which he would decide questions relating to baptism.—It might be difficult to prove, that *all* those to whom directions are given in the Epistles of Paul had been baptized in any way,—and especially, that they had all been immersed. But suppose they had been: it is still true, confessedly so, that the modern questions respecting baptism are unessential to Christian character and a hope of heaven, and consequently that they rest on the same *general* ground with the questions agitated in the days of Paul. It could not be expected that the directions of the Apostles would meet all the particular cases which might occur in the church, from that period to the end of the world. They laid down general principles, and applied them to cases immediately in hand; but left it to the wisdom of other ages further to use and apply them, as there might be occasion.

Nothing is more certain from the New Testament, than that the church of Christ is *one body*. "As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are *one body in* Christ, and every one members one of another." Rom. xii. 4, 5. And this is true, not only of the *real, spiritual*

church of Christ, but equally so of the *visible* church. For what is the visible church? It is the real church bodied forth, *made visible*, by a credible profession of godliness; so that if Christ's spiritual church is one, his visible church must be equally so; and if the former may with propriety be represented as *his body*, the latter is his *visible body*. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into *one body*." "Now ye are the *body of Christ*, and members in particular." 1 Cor. xii. 13, 27. To divide the church of Christ, therefore, is to divide *his body*. To separate a portion of the acknowledged members of his church, and refuse to hold communion with them, is, as Mr. Baxter expresses it, to "separate the members of Christ's Body, and tear his flesh, and break his bones." This, it hardly need be said, is as *unscriptural* as it is unnatural. "*Is Christ divided?*"

The Scriptures represent the human family as belonging to *two* general classes, believers and unbelievers, saints and sinners; and to those of the former class—*all* who give evidence of belonging to the number of God's children, they uniformly appropriate the privileges of his children. These are the members of his family, and entitled, as such, to the provisions of his house. Hence, to make a separation between persons of this character, and exclude a part of them from the table of their Lord, is a proceeding, not only unknown to the Scriptures, but manifestly *contrary* to the general spirit and current of the sacred writings.

It is evidently the will of Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, that his followers should be *one*. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which *shall believe on me through their word*,—that *they all may be one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be *one* in us." John xvii. 20, 21. Hence, those Christians may be sure that they best perform the will of

Christ, who strive most earnestly and successfully to prevent divisions, and promote unity and peace among his *true* followers. But how shall this important object be best promoted? By drawing lines of separation between the disciples of Christ, and excluding a part of them from their Master's table?. Or by bearing with one another's mistakes and infirmities, in things unessential to Christian character, and receiving one another, even as Christ has received them?

In every view which can be taken of the subject, I am constrained to regard what is commonly called *close communion* as unscriptural. It was entirely unknown in the first age of the church. The Apostles seem not to have contemplated such a thing as possible. Of course, they did not expressly prohibit it; and yet they established principles which, by a fair and general application, go decidedly to condemn it.

2. The practice of close communion is contrary to that of the church *in the ages succeeding the Apostles.* There were differences of opinion among the primitive believers in regard to points not deemed essential; but these were not suffered to break the unity of the church. Such was the dispute about the time and manner of celebrating Easter. This may be deemed a trifling matter to Christians of the present age; but in primitive times, it was a question of high interest and importance. And when Victor, one of the bishops of Rome, undertook to excommunicate his Eastern brethren, because they would not yield to his opinion on the subject, he was rebuked for so unchristian a procedure, and obliged to retrace his steps. Says Irenæus, writing to him, "The Presbyters who before ruled the church which you now govern, neither observed themselves, nor permitted their people to observe, the day which is kept by the Asiatic Christians; nevertheless, while they did not observe that day,

they maintained peace with the other Presbyters who did; and never were any on account of this diversity cast out of the church; but the Presbyters who preceded you, and did not keep the day, *sent the Eucharist to those who did.* And when blessed Polycarp went on a journey to Rome, in the time of Anicetus, and they had some little difference about other matters, they immediately dropped it for the sake of peace, and would by no means cherish contention on this head. Anicetus could not, indeed, persuade Polycarp to relinquish his observance as having always kept it with John, the disciple of the Lord, and the other Apostles with whom he had been conversant. Nor did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to adopt it, as he pleaded for the necessity of retaining the custom of the Presbyters who had gone before him. Yet, while things were in this state, *they held communion with each other.* And in the church, Anicetus, from pure respect, *yielded to Polycarp the dispensation of the Eucharist*, and they amicably separated from each other, and the peace of the whole church was preserved, both by those who kept the day, and those who did not."*

Another dispute with which the church in those times was agitated, related to the validity of certain baptisms, and was not altogether unlike modern questions touching the same subject. Many doubted concerning the baptisms administered by heretics, and whether it was proper to receive persons so baptized into the church, without a repetition of the ordinance. But neither was this matter, for a considerable time at least, permitted to interrupt the fellowship of the church. "Many things," says an excellent man, writing to the celebrated Cyprian at this period—"many things vary according to the diversity of place and people; but nevertheless, *these variations have*

* Euseb. Ecc. Hist. Lib. vi. Cap. 24.

*at no time infringed the peace and unity of the Catholic church."**

There were differences of opinion among the primitive Christians in regard to the subject of *church government.* Originally, the church was governed by Presbyters, the words Presbyter and Bishop designating the same office. But in the course of a few centuries, Episcopal government was introduced, and the primitive order of things was changed. In proof of this, the following quotation from Jerome is decisive. "*A Presbyter is the same as a Bishop;* and before there were, by the instigation of the devil, dissensions in religion, and it was said among the people, *I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas,* the churches were governed by *the joint counsel of the Presbyters.* But *afterwards,* when every one accounted those whom he baptized as belonging to himself, and not to Christ, it was decreed throughout the whole world, that one chosen from among the Presbyters, *should be put over the rest,* and that the whole care of the church should be committed to him, and the seeds of of schism be taken away."—Again this learned father says, after having quoted and commented on several passages of Scripture in proof of the same point, "Among the ancients, *Presbyters and Bishops were the very same.* But by degrees, (*paulatim*) that the plants of dissensions might be plucked up, the whole concern was devolved upon an individual. As the Presbyters, therefore, know that, by *the custom of the church,* they are subjected to him who is set over them, so let the Bishops know, that they are greater than Presbyters, *more by custom,* than by any real appointment of Christ."†

Such is the language of one who lived within a few

* Cypriani Opera, Part ii. p. 220. See also Murdock's Mosheim, Vol i. p. 226.

† Hyronymi Opera, Tom. vi. p. 168.

centuries of the Apostles, testifying to the changes which had taken place in the government of the church. Yet the changes, and the differences of opinion and discussions which must necessarily have grown out of them, did not produce, and were not thought sufficient to warrant *separate communions.* Those who were the most strenuous in opposition to the prevailing innovations were entirely averse, as Jerome tells us in another place, to "cutting asunder the harmony of brotherly union."

Our Baptist brethren believe that, in the times of the Apostles infant baptism was unknown; but that in a few centuries it was introduced, and prevailed, and became almost or altogether universal,—so that in the age of Augustine, the learned and acute Pelagius was constrained to declare, that he "never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants."* It is natural to suppose that so great an innovation (if an innovation it be,) must have led to differences of opinion and disputes; and yet we ask—not for the evidence of such disputes (this would be out of place here)—but for the evidence that these disputes, if they did exist, were suffered to break the unity of the church. Where were the churches which on account of this alleged innovation, *withdrew from their brethren, and refused to have communion with them at the table of the Lord?* Suffice it to say, that we have no trace of any such churches in ancient times, and no reason to believe that any existed; and this fact, were there no other, ought to satisfy the abettors of close communion, that they have departed from the example of the primitive Christians.

It is claimed, too, by our Baptist brethren, that there were many of their sentiments previous to the reformation from Popery, but that they mingled promiscuously with the other pious dissenters, and were closely concealed

* See Wall's Hist. of In Baptism, Vol. i. p. 62.

from the eyes of their persecutors. Thus it is said by Benedict, in his history of the Baptists, that "before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, particularly in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland, and Germany, many persons who adhered tenaciously to the doctrine which the Waldenses, Wickliffites, and Hussites had maintained. These concealed Christians," he adds, "we have good reasons for believing, were MOSTLY Baptists." And Crosby says that, previous to the year 1633, the Baptists in England "had been *intermixed with other Protestant Dissenters without distinction*, and shared with the Puritans in the persecutions of those times."* Here are express admissions on the part of learned Baptist historians that previous to the reformation, *their brethren were 'intermixed with other dissenters,'* and of course that close communion was unknown.

3. The practice of close communion necessarily leads those who adopt it into *various and palpable inconsistences.*—It would seem from their principles, that what are commonly called Pedobaptist churches are not, in any proper sense, churches of Christ. Baptism, we are told, is "the divinely appointed mode of entrance into the visible church;" and Pedobaptists have not been baptized. Of course, they have not so much as *entered* the visible church; and hence their associations in covenant cannot with any propriety be denominated churches. If the premises are admited, the conclusion would seem inevitable. And yet most of the close-communionists with whom I am acquainted admit that the Pedobaptist churches are churches of Christ; and that their ministers are ministers of Christ.† Indeed, the ministers of the two denomina-

* See Benedict's Hist. of the Baptists, Vol. i. pp. 133, 197.

† See an Article in the Boston Recorder of May 25, 1822, adopted by an extensive union of Baptists and Pedobaptists, in which the churches of the two denominations are recognized as churches of Christ, and their ministers as ministers of Christ, qualified to perform ministerial acts.

tions freely associate as ministers of Christ, in religious meetings, Ecclesiastical councils, an exchange of services, &c.

But then again, if the Pedobaptist churches *are* churches of Christ, why not commune with them as such? And why not admit their members at least to occasional communion? Why present the strange anomaly of acknowledged church members, who cannot be received to an ordinance of the church; and of those who are admitted to fellowship in every other mode, as members of Christ's church and ministers of his kingdom, who are not admitted to a seat at his table?

In reply to what is here urged, it is insisted by Mr. Fuller, in his Conversations on Mixed and Strict Communion, (pp. 106—110,) that the office of a gospel minister does not belong to the *church relation*, or at least is not peculiar to it, so that a person may consistently be received as a preacher of the gospel, who is not regarded as a church member. But is the gentleman serious in this matter? And if he is, are the Baptists of our own country prepared to adopt his views? It would be doing them great injustice to suppose it. In licensing a man to preach the gospel, and especially in ordaining him, no people would be more likely than they to inquire into his *church relation and standing*; nor do I believe they would admit one, on any account into their pulpits, to declare to them the truth of God, who they did not suppose was a member of the church of Christ.

It has been said by some, that as the Lord's supper is a *positive institution*, it rests on different ground from that of other religious services, in which unbaptized persons may consistently unite. But I would ask, in reply, whether the *gospel ministry* is not a positive institution; and one of as great importance, and demanding as high qualifications, as the Lord's supper? Indeed, does it not

demand much higher qualifications? How many thousands are there in the churches, worthy partakers of the Lord's supper, whom no one would think qualified to preach the gospel?—I would inquire, too, whether the Apostle did not consider preaching as a more important work, than even *administering* ordinances? The latter could be done by ordinary helpers; but "Christ," says he "sent *me*, not to baptize, but to *preach the gospel*." 1 Cor. i: 17.

The advocates of close communion are willing to admit, that many Pedobaptists are *real Christians*. But if they are real Christians, they are in the number of God's *children* and have a right to sit at their Father's table. If they are real Christians, they have *spiritual* communion with Christ and his people, and ought to be permitted to have visible communion. God communes with them, if they are real Christians; and why should any of the professing people of God be more strict in their communion, than he is? If Pedobaptists are real Christians, they are among those who feed upon Christ *by faith;* and why are they not permitted to feed upon the appointed *emblems* of his body and blood? They are partakers *really and spiritually;* and why should they not be sacramentally? If Pedobaptists are real Christians, they are heirs of heaven, and will shortly be received to heaven; and why should it be made more difficult to obtain a seat at certain sacramental tables on earth, than to procure admission to the marriage supper of the Lamb above? Heaven is certainly the great object and end of the Christian's pilgrimage, and earthly ordinances are but the means of obtaining it; and why should it be made more difficult to secure the means than the end? Why should the Lord's table be barred against the approach of those, to whom the gate of heaven is open?

The advocates of close communion are not a little embarrassed with the question, whether it is right for Pedobaptists to celebrate the Lord's supper in their own churches. As this ordinance is a positive divine institution, it must be *the same* under all circumstances; so that if it is right for Pedobaptists to celebrate it in one place, it is right in another; or if it is wrong in one place, it is wrong (other things being equal) in another. Hence, if it is wrong for them to celebrate the supper in connexion with Baptists, it is wrong, and no less a profanation of the ordinance, for them to celebrate it by themselves. Accordingly, when pressed with the argument in this direction, our brethren commonly speak out, and declare it to be 'a departure from the traditions of the Apostles, and a pouring contempt on one of the positive institutions of Christ,' for us to come to the communion in the manner we do.* Yet, on the other hand, they appear to manifest no great uneasiness at the continuance of this alledged profanation; will consent to preach our sacramental lectures; and by their conduct seem to say, that if we will only keep at a distance from them, and celebrate the ordinance by ourselves, they are satisfied. Indeed, Mr. Fuller, in the work already referred to, expressly says, that "on their own principles, Pedobaptists *do right* in partaking of the Lord's supper." p. 32.

It affords me no pleasure to urge these inconsistencies upon my brethren of the strict communion; but as their practice necessarily involves them, and many more, it is important that they should be able to appreciate some of the difficulties with which, in the judgment of others, their system is encumbered.

4. I object again to the practice of close communion, that it is *an interruption of mutual charity*, and *a kin-*

* See Andrews's Strictures, &c., p. 40.

drance to Christian love. It leads those who adopt it to judge the hearts of their brethren, and impugn their motives, as they would not do, were it not for the difficulties with which they feel themselves pressed in relation to this subject. Although they are willing to admit, as already stated, that many Pedobaptists are pious persons—some of them eminently so—yet when they come to apologize for not admitting them to the Lord's table on the ground of their alleged mistakes in regard to baptism, they almost uniformly assail their motives. Thus in the work of Fuller, the excellent Baxter is charged with "avowing his conviction of one system, and acting on another," p. 134; and Pedobaptists generally are said to live in *voluntary* error, which is to live in allowed sin, p. 126. Even Professor Ripley, with all his candor (and in general he is very candid) cannot help insinuating, that many are prevented from adopting Baptist principles, because they "fear to examine;" or "hastily think themselves incompetent to form an opinion;" or "are under the influence of prejudice from various quarters;" or are deterred by "the inconveniences attending the adoption of such sentiments."* Now I am far from saying that no person was ever kept back from becoming a Baptist or a Pedobaptist by considerations like these; but I suppose they are as likely to operate one way as the other, and that it is not very charitable, in either party, to attribute the alleged mistakes of the other to the influence of such motives

The principles of close communion tend to interrupt charity, as they lead those who embrace them, and have sufficient hardihood of consistency to carry them out, to wage a war of extermination upon other sects. The consistent close-communionist regards the entire mass of the

* Review of Dr. Griffin's Letter.

members of Pedobaptist churches as unbaptized, and consequently as disqualified for Christian communion; and he is prompted by what he thinks a zeal for God to do what he can to diminish their number. If he can seduce a sheep from the fold of his Pedobaptist neighbor, he thinks it so much gained to the cause of truth; and he will feel strong inducements, under such circumstances, to draw away as many as possible. I do not say that our ministerial brethren of the strict communion actually pursue the course here described; *far from it*. A great majority of them at the present day are under the influence of so many counteracting principles, that they would not consent, on any account, to violate the courtesies of Christian intercourse, or entrench upon the duties or the rights of others. But I am endeavoring to exhibit the legitimate tendency of close communion, when carried into full and consistent operation; and it cannot be thought strange that those who practise it should be regarded often with suspicion, and that a sad interruption to the overflowings of Christian love should be the consequence.

The principles of close communion are a hindrance to the exercise of Christian love, as they tend to foster pride in those who embrace them, under the idea of having done more than others, and of possessing superior qualifications; and to wound the feelings of Pedobaptists, under the impression of being set aside as disqualified for the communion of saints. These principles also lead to disputes and separations, which too often terminate in excited feelings, alienation, and enmity. Christians forget that they are engaged in a common cause, and have a common interest, and fail to afford each other that sympathy and support which circumstances demand, and the laws of Christ require. They fail to bear one anoth-

er's burthens, and to co-operate as they ought in prayers and labors to promote the religion of the Saviour.

It is evidence of the truth of what is here stated, that when religion is revived in a community, and Baptists and Pedobaptists are accustomed to meet together, till their love is enkindled and their hearts are warmed, the attachment of the former to close communion almost uniformly diminishes. The hearts of numbers who had previously practised it are pained; and not a few indignantly reject it. So often have scenes of this nature been witnessed, that there can be no mistake in regard to them.

It is a remarkable fact, too, that Missionaries who have left their native country in the belief of the principles of close communion, have not unfrequently renounced them, after laboring for a time among the heathen. This was the case with Mr. Hough, of the American Baptist mission in Burmah. It was the case with the celebrated William Ward, so long a Missionary in Bengal. It was the case, too, with the excellent Mr. Chater, of the Baptist mission in Ceylon. Christian Missionaries among the heathen are in a favorable situation to feel the influence of Christian love, and the strength of those ties which ought to bind the hearts of Christians together; and if the principles of close communion are no *hindrance* to the exercise of love and charity, in what way are the facts on this subject to be accounted for?

Of the same general bearing is the fact, that close communion is not unfrequently renounced in *sickness*, and in *near views of death*.* I am far from attaching an

* "In S. B. lived a man of the Baptist church, who for many years had not called in question the correctness of that article of the Baptist faith which excludes acknowledged Christians from communion. When sick, as there was no church of the same faith in the place, a minister of the Congregational order was sent for. After conversation and prayer suited to

undue importance or authority to what is said or done on beds of sickness; but Christian love often flows purer and rises higher at such times than before—so high as to break over sectarian barriers, and embrace with full affection all who bear the image of the Saviour.

5. I object to the principles of close communion that, under the consistent operation of them, there will often occur cases of *real hardship*.—Those who have been born of God and truly love him, usually set a high value upon their seasons of sacramental communion. They love to sit down with their fellow disciples at the table of their Lord, lean upon his breast at supper, and feed upon the memorials of his body and blood. But circumstances may be supposed, and are likely often to occur, in which individuals may be deprived of this privilege for years, perhaps during the greater part of their lives, unless they are admitted to communion in the Baptist churches. Here is a pious, devoted mother, a member of a Pedobaptist church, whose lot Divine Providence has cast

the sick, the love of God so filled the soul, as to break over all sectarian bounds. The tongue of the sick was loosed, to expatiate upon that charity which limits its complacency only by the want of evidence of genuine piety. After much self-examination and deep regret, for not walking in love with those whom Christ receives to his fellowship, and expressing a lively hope that this and all other sins were forgiven, the eyes were closed in death." [See Boston Recorder, March 1, 1823.]

"In Roxbury, Vt., A. D. 1821, Mr. R., an aged member of the Baptist church, when on his death bed, sent for a member of the Congregational church to visit him. He had been decidedly against communing with Pedobaptists; but after a little conversation, when his neighbor was about to return, he told him that he had something more to say. He tarried; and the sick man told him that he had a desire to commune with him and his brethren before he left the world. There was no minister in the place, and to appearance, he could not live till they could obtain one. His anxiety, however, was so great, that a part of the Congregational church was collected, one of the deacons consecrated the elements, he partook with them, and soon after died.—It is easier for Christians to reject each other in life, than when they are entering into the immediate presence of God, and going to join the general assembly above." [Brooks's Reply, p. 58.]

where she can have Christian intercourse only with Baptists. And her intercourse with them is in general pleasant. She listens to their preachers, and is instructed and edified. She meets with them in the praying circle, and her heart is warmed. She co-operates with them in works of faith and labors of love, and in promoting various objects of Christian benevolence. Her affections mingle with theirs, and theirs with hers, and they are spiritually of one heart and soul. But when the table of the Lord is spread, and she asks permission to approach, she is grieved to find herself excluded. 'And why,' she asks, 'am I excluded? Do I not give you satisfactory evidence of being a child of God—of being one with you in spirit—of being one with whom the Saviour communes? And why can I not have communion with you?'—'Why, dear sister,' it is replied, '*you have not been baptized.*'—'But I have been baptized,' she rejoins. 'I have given myself up to God in baptism, according to his appointment, and in that manner which I think most agreeable to his will.'—'Ah, but you are mistaken on that subject; we know you are; you must renounce your pretended baptism, and go with us into the water, and then we can receive you.'—'Renounce my baptism,' she exclaims. 'I can never do that. It was the most sacred action of my life. I might almost as well renounce my Saviour.'—'Well, sister, we are sorry for you; but unless you can comply with *our terms*, we cannot receive you.' And so this child of God, because she will not do violence to her conscience, and renounce what she deems the most sacred act of her life, is driven away from her Father's table; and this, too, under circumstances in which it is known that she can have communion with no other church, but must pass her life, and perhaps end her days, and never more have the privilege of coming to the sacramental board. And is there no hardship in all this?

Is there nothing revolting to the pious heart?* And let it not be thought that this is wholly an imaginary case. It is drawn from the life. There are many such instances now in existence. And if the principles of close communion were more widely diffused, they would be proportionally multiplied. Can these principles, then, be in accordance with the gospel? Can they be a part of that religion which says expressly to its professors, when differing on points not essential to salvation, 'Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?'

But instances like that above described are not the only cases of hardship growing out of close communion. There are others of a different character. It is a fact, that no inconsiderable proportion of the members of the Baptist churches are opposed to close communion; their consciences are pained with it, and their souls are in bondage on account of it. Mr. Hall, says, "It frequently happens that the constitution of a church continues to sanction strict communion, while the sentiments of a *vast majority* of its members are decidedly in favor of a contrary system." In another place he expresses the opinion that *a majority* of the present Baptists are in favor of open communion. Works, Vol. i. pp. 396, 401. A Baptist minister of our own country also says, "It is not known by the close communion Baptists how many there are of their own denomination who believe, in their

* There is reason to believe, that the operation of the principles of close communion is often as painful to those who exclude, as to those who are excluded. A brother in the ministry (not a Baptist) who had acted upon these principles, and had excluded a female under circumstances not altogether unlike those above detailed, writes, "She put her kerchief to her eyes, and turned away, struggling with anguish, and the tears streaming down her cheeks. How did my heart smite me! I went home exclaiming to myself, '*Can this be right? Is it possible that such is the law of the Redeemer's house?*'" [Mason's Plea, &c. p. 7.]

hearts, in open communion. I was surprised, after divulging my sentiments, to find so many who entertained the same belief—some of them for years." Brooks's Essay, p. 22. This testimony is in accordance with my own observation. I am acquainted with not a few individuals, members of Baptist churches, who freely acknowledge that they are not satisfied with close communion—that they believe it unscriptural—and that they would abandon it at once, were it not for displeasing some of their brethren.—But is it no hardship for a Christian to live in this way—habitually trifling with his conscience, and conniving at that which he thinks is wrong, from a fear of giving offence to his brethren? Is such a state of mind favorable to Christian enjoyment? Is this the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free?

6. I object to the practice of close communion, that it is upheld and continued, in part at least, from *sectarian motives.* I should not feel warranted in making this assertion, however clearly facts might seem to justify it, were it not that the truth of it is acknowledged. In the work already referred to, Mr. Fuller says, "The tendency of mixed communion is to annihilate, *as such,* all the Baptist churches in Christendom." And he asks, "Do you wish to promote the dissolution and ruin of *the Baptist denomination, as such?* If you do not, take heed to your ways." pp. 24, 25. Thus close communion is confessedly to be retained, because its continuance is deemed necessary to the existence of a sect. One of the lines of separation between the members of Christ's mystical body would be gradually worn out and disappear, were it not for close communion; and therefore the practice must be vigorously maintained.

In reply to this I will only say, that I have no fears for the denomination to which I belong, in consequence of a

free and fraternal intercourse with other denominations of real Christians. If we cannot mingle freely with brethren of other names, who agree with us in holding the Head, and look candidly and closely into their peculiarities, and suffer them to look into ours, without losing our existence as a sect, *then we desire to lose it.* The sooner we incur the loss, the better.—The time has come, when Christians must think less about their peculiar sects, their denominations "*as such*," and more about the general interests of truth and the kingdom of Christ. And it is objection enough to any practice in the church, that it requires to be sustained by fomenting a sectarian spirit.

7. I object again to close communion, that it *is opposed to the spirit of the age*, and operates in various ways to retard the progress of Christ's kingdom.—The age in which we live is one of peculiar interest. The Christian world is awaking from its slumbers to unwonted efforts; and Satan is coming out in great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time. The people of God are beginning to move and operate together; and the enemies of truth and righteousness are doing the same. On every hand, lines are drawing, and sides are taking, preparatory to the conflict of the last days. The aspect of the times obviously demands the utmost practicable union among Christians, and that every thing tending to obstruct this union should be speedily taken out of the way. One of these obstructions, unquestionably, is close communion. This tends, as we have seen, to break the unity of the church, to interrupt mutual charity, to hinder the exercise of Christian love. It divides the affections, and insulates and weakens the efforts of those, who ought to love as brethren, and to go hand in hand to their appropriate work. It leads those often to waste their strength upon each other, whose united strength ought to

be directed against a common enemy. It causes them to interfere and contend with each other, between whom there should be no strife, except who shall be most fervent in love, and most zealous in efforts for promoting the Redeemer's kingdom.

An incalculable amount of time, labor, and money, which is now expended for sectarian purposes, might be directed to the common interests of Christianity, were it not for close communion. In how many places in the United States, where there are now two or three societies, all feeble, struggling for existence, and aided perhaps by public charity, might there be one strong, efficient society, able to support itself and to assist others, if those who regard each other as real Christians could only consent to commune together at the table of the Lord? I earnestly wish my brethren of the close communion to take this subject into serious consideration, and would inquire whether—wherever there are now two or three societies or meeting houses where, but for their principles, there need be but one—the whole of this needless expense is not justly chargeable to their account;—and whether—wherever there are now two or three ministers stationed where, but for close communion, there need be but one—nearly the whole of this superfluous labor, which might be expended in building up the wastes of Zion, is not now lost to the general cause of Christ?*

On the whole, I have no doubt that the principles of close communion are wrong;—that they are contrary to

* Evangelical Baptists and Pedobaptists have found already that they can worship together with mutual satisfaction; and if they could but *commune together at the table of the Lord*, they might be associated, wherever there should be occasion, in the same congregation; the Pastor might be of either denomination, according to the wishes of the majority; and nothing would be wanting in such an establishment, but a spirit of forbearance, accommodation and love—a zeal *for God*, and not for a sect—to promote its prosperity and peace.

the Scriptures, and to the practice of the church in the purest times; that they tend to involve those who hold them in great inconsistencies; and are, in various ways, of injurious influence to the cause of Christ. I say this, not to reproach any of my Baptist brethren or to give them pain; but to bring them, if possible, to consideration, and to devising ways and means by which the evil in question may be removed. There can be no doubt that the most of them are conscientious and sincere. They are those with whom, so far as permitted, we can take sweet counsel now; and with whom, were it not for close communion, our fellowship might be complete. The obvious tendency of things, at present, is to remove this difficulty; and I have no doubt that, previous to the Millennium, it will be taken entirely out of the way; but *how shall this be done?* How shall the grand obstacle in the way of free and open communion be removed?

It will be seen that this is a point on which it does not become a Congregationalist to dictate—perhaps not to advise; and yet (if it may be permitted) I should like to offer a few remarks.

The grand difficulty in the way of open communion, as hinted at the commencement of this discussion, is a difference of opinion respecting baptism. Our Baptist brethren insist—on the ground of the Apostolical communion and practice, the significancy of the two ordinances, and the general suffrage of the church—that baptism is necessary, previous to communion. They also insist, that the members of our churches have not been baptized. Consequently they infer, as they think, conclusively, that these members cannot with propriety be admitted to the table of the Lord.* The question now is,

* I have called the difficulty, as above stated, the *grand* difficulty; but with many of the advocates of close communion it seems not to be the only one. There are those who insist that we must be not only immersed, but

How shall this objection be obviated? How shall the difficulty be removed?

I see no probability that this difficulty will be soon removed by a general change of sentiment in our churches, and by our members becoming Baptists. There *has been* an expectation of this sort among Baptists—perhaps there is still; but I see no prospect of its speedy accomplishment. The difference of opinion between us and them has long been a subject of solicitude and study; and for one I can truly say, that the more I consider of it, the more I am convinced that I shall never be a Baptist. And so far as I know, my own experience on this head is conformable to that of my brethren generally. The relative strength and position of the two denominations, and the progress which each is making from year to year, also show, that no general changes are to be expected.

Besides; if the other denominations are ever to become Baptists, it is scarcely possible that the change should be effected under the present system of operations. Entirely separate, as we now are, in our public worship and ordinances, and under the influence of a variety of causes tending to foment and perpetuate sectarian prejudices, how can it be expected that either party should make any great approaches towards the other? I agree entirely with Mr. Hall, that if the peculiarities of the Baptist de-

immersed by one who has been himself immersed; and more than this, we must pledge ourselves to have no communion with those who have not been qualified in the same way. But close communionists of this stamp may (I trust without offence) be denominated *ultras*. They would not have communed with Roger Williams himself. They would have *excommunicated* such Baptists as John Bunyan, and William Ward, and Robert Hall. Indeed, according to their principles, it is not likely that there is now a Baptist in America (not excepting themselves even) who is suitably qualified for sacramental communion; as it is not likely there is an individual, who, if his baptism were traced back, would not find the succession originating in one who had not himself been *canonically* immersed.

nomination are *true*—if they will bear the test of examination—and if those who hold them are desirous to promote them; their past policy has been a miserable one, and it is high time they were pursuing a more liberal course. Instead of holding themselves so entirely separate, and keeping their brethren at a distance, they should seek the fellowship of other denominations *who agree with them in holding the Head* and mingle with them as freely and fraternally as possible. In this way they may disarm prejudice, invite candid examination and discussion, and *if the truth is with them*, it will be likely to prevail. For one, I can truly say that I desire to pursue a course like this, and am perfectly willing to risk the fate of my Pedobaptist peculiarities on the issue of it. If these peculiarities are not founded in truth, the sooner we become convinced the better; and it is greatly to be desired that the whole Pedobaptist community may be placed in circumstances to look at the subject without prejudice, and give it as thorough an examination as possible.

'But how shall we admit you to communion,' it is asked, 'so long as we regard you as unbaptized?'—If our brethren are in earnest in proposing this question, I am very willing to confer with them on the subject. And with due deference I would inquire, why we may not be admitted, at least to occasional communion, on the ground proposed by Mr. Hall. Allowing that baptism should, as a general thing, precede the supper, is the connexion between the two institutions of such a nature, that the order of them may, under no circumstances, be changed? If the baptism of John was not Christian baptism, as was held by the ancients,* and is now conceded by the most

* Origen says, "Christ himself was baptized by John, not with that baptism which is in Christ, but with that which is *in the law*." Comment on Rom. vi. Chrysostom says, "It (the Baptism of John) was as it were a

intelligent Baptists,* is it not certain that the Apostles had not received Christian Baptism, at the time of the first celebration of the Lord's Supper? And if it be said that their's was an extraordinary case, will it not be lawful to follow their example, at least in extraordinary cases? There is a natural order in which most of the duties incumbent on us should be attended to; but it does not follow usually, because the first in a series has been neglected, that the remainder cannot be performed. For instance, it is according to the established order in our public worship, that singing should precede the principal prayer, and the prayer the sermon; but because a person is not present to unite in the singing, may he not unite in the prayer? Or because he is not present to unite in the prayer, may he not listen to the sermon? It is Christ's direction that those who are capable of instruction should be taught before they are baptized. But suppose a minister of the Gospel is requested to baptize a believer who he is satisfied knows four times as much as himself; must he pause and go through the formality of teaching such an one, before he ventures to administer the ordinance? So if, from misapprehension or any other cause not affecting his religious character, a sincere Christian has not received baptism, and yet desires to be admitted to the Lord's Table, who shall say that he may not come? Because he has been prevented from obeying one command of Christ, who shall prohibit him from obeying another? —But on this branch of the subject it is not necessary to enlarge. The works of Mr. Hall are before the public,

bridge which, from the baptism of the Jews, made a way to that of the Saviour. It was superior to the first, but inferior to the second." Homil. 24.

* "John's Baptism did not serve for Christ's. Paul baptized the disciples of John the Baptist, because they had not been baptized into the faith of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and because they had been baptized only in the faith of a Messiah to come." Carson and Cox on Baptism, p. 284.

in which everything which need be said in support of this theory is urged with a surpassing eloquence.

To the advocates of strict communion I will venture to suggest another way in which the difficulties between us may he consistently got over. Let them cease to judge another man's servant, and leave him to stand or fall to his own Master. We who differ from them on the subject of baptism, are not conscious of neglecting or trifling with the ordinance more than they. We profess to hold it in as high estimation as they do. We observe it according to the dictates of our own consciences—according, as we think, to the institution and will of Christ. We find great satisfaction in the ordinance, and believe that our Saviour approves and blesses us in it. And now; brethren, why can you not meet us on this ground? Unless you are infallible, you cannot *know* we are wrong, any more than we know you are. And why can you not consent to say, 'If you love and prize the ordinance of baptism as you understand it, and really think that you observe it according to the institution of Christ, then enjoy your own opinion. It is not within our province to judge you. We think indeed that you are mistaken; but the mistake is yours, not ours; and as it is not of a nature to prevent us from loving and embracing you as Christians, it shall not longer interrupt our Christian communion. Here, brethren, is the table of our common Lord. Come and partake of it if you choose; and if you have mistaken the nature of the previous ordinance, you must settle it with Christ, and not with us.'—With an invitation such as this, Pedobaptists would be perfectly satisfied. If they are in error, they do not wish their brethren to be partakers with them in the error. If they have in anything mistaken the will of Christ, they choose to assume the responsibility themselves, and to refer the matter directly to him.

It may be inquired here, whether Pedobaptists would not act on the same principle with those of the strict communion, and exclude from the Lord's Table, under all circumstances, those whom they regarded as unbaptized? And if I may be allowed to speak in the name of my brethren, I answer confidently, NO. Were a person to request communion with us, who professed to love and prize the ordinance of baptism; who sincerely thought he had been baptized; and who gave evidence of being prepared to enjoy spiritual communion with Christ; we should certainly admit him, although *we* might regard his baptism as a nullity. And such cases not unfrequently occur at the present time in our churches. Some of our brethren consider the baptisms which were formerly administered on the ground of the half-way covenant as invalid; and more have the same opinion in regard to the baptisms of Catholics and Unitarians. But should a pious, godly professor of religion, who had been baptized in either of these ways, and was satisfied with what had been done, request to come to the Lord's Table with us, we should certainly admit him, whatever opinion we might entertain respecting the validity of his baptism. If *he* was seriously and conscientiously satisfied on the subject, we should not undertake to judge betwixt him and his Master, but should leave the question of his baptism to be determined at a higher tribunal.

But it will be inquired again by those on the other side, 'As we regard baptism, both in the order of nature and by divine appointment, as pre-requisite to communion, and regard Pedobaptists, however sincere they may be, as unbaptized; how can we receive them to communion, without becoming partakers of their sin?' And to this question I reply by asking another, Are you sure that Pedobaptists *commit sin* in coming to the Lord's Table, even on supposition that they have misapprehended

the nature of baptism? They have received what they most seriously believe to be Christian baptism, and feel under solemn obligations to come to the Lord's table in remembrance of him. And now what shall they do? Can you in conscience affirm that it will be sinful for them to come? On the contrary, as they view the subject, will it not be sinful for them to stay away?—But I hardly need ask questions such as these, as the more recent and intelligent advocates of close communion have already decided them. Mr. Fuller says expressly, "On their own principles, they (Pedobaptists) *do right* in partaking of the Lord's Supper, though in our opinion unbaptized; *their* conviction, and not *ours*, being their proper directory."* Mr. Kinghorn, in his reply to Hall, takes the same ground. Now this is all which need be said in the case. If Pedobaptists were admitted to the Lord's table with Baptists, they would come "on their own principles," and in compliance with their own convictions of duty; and consequently, as Mr. F. says, they would "do right"—they would not sin—and their brethren in admitting them, need be in no fear of becoming partakers in other men's sins.

But say our Baptists friends again, 'Should we not, by such a procedure, at least give countenance to what we conceive to be an error?' And I answer, *Not necessarily.* It being known at the time that you do not coincide in opinion on the subject of Baptism with your Pedobaptist brother, but merely consent that he shall come to the table with you—on his own principles and responsibility, and in compliance with his own convictions of duty—because you believe he is one who has communion with the Saviour; I do not perceive that you would be yielding any sinful or dangerous countenance to what you believe to be his errors. And I would with deference inquire,

*Conversations, &c. p. 32.

whether you do not come to the same conclusion, in regard to most other unessential points of difference? Some of your brethren believe the seventh day of the week to be the Christian Sabbath, to be observed according to the fourth commandment. Others believe that there is no weekly Sabbath under the new dispensation, but that (except from considerations of custom and expediency) every day should be regarded alike. Others still believe, that if God has called a person to preach the Gospel, he will give him the requisite qualifications, and that the whole system of educating young men for the ministry, is needless, if not pernicious. Now would you refuse communion to these several classes of persons, however pious they might seem to be, and however unquestionable the validity of their baptism, for fear of giving countenance to their errors? I hope not. I presume not. Because, your own views on these subjects being known and understood, you would not necessarily give any countenance to their errors. It would be seen, that you merely tolerated the persons, because you believed they belonged to Christ, while you disapproved and rejected what you conceived to be their errors, and prayed that they might be instructed in the way of the Lord more perfectly. And on the same ground, why may you not receive the pious Pedobaptist, without giving any improper countenance to his supposed errors? On no subject are your views more fully understood, than on that of baptism; and the only inference which could justly be drawn from the fact of your receiving the Pedobaptist would be, that you were willing to have communion with him, because you believed he belonged to Christ, at the same time that you deplored what you deemed his errors, and prayed that he might be instructed in the way of the Lord more perfectly. And I may leave it to your own consciences to decide, whether such an inference would

be disgraceful to you as Christians, or dishonorable to religion, or of dangerous consequence to the church of Christ.

In conclusion, I can assure my Baptist readers, that I have pressed this subject upon their consideration, not from motives of personal or sectarian interest, but solely from a regard to the cause of religion, and the general interests of Christ's kingdom. I dwell among my own people, and have no expectation that I shall ever have occasion to ask or receive communion with a Baptist church,—though I would gladly do it, should the occasion be presented. And when I look at the Pedobaptist churches, and consider their increase, their numbers, and strength; I feel under no apprehension of their *relatively* suffering from a continuance of the present system. I have no doubt that they can live separate from the Baptists, as well as the Baptists can while separate from them. And I have no doubt that both denominations can live, and act, and do some good, with a brazen wall towering between them from earth to heaven. But I as little doubt, that both denominations might live a great deal better, and act more efficiently, and accomplish more in the cause of Christ, if this brazen wall could be demolished; or at least if pass-ways could be opened through it, so that there might be occasional communication one way and the other. What God has joined together seems now to be unwarrantably put asunder. The body of Christ is divided and dismembered. Those who ought to have a common interest, have separate interests. Those between whom there ought to be the best understanding, and a spirit of mutual accommodation and sympathy, are often seen interfering with each other's plans, and running in each other's way. Those who ought to put forth their united strength 'against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world,

against spiritual wickedness in high places,' are too often found turning away from the common enemy, and wasting their energies one upon another. God has indeed been very gracious to us in pouring out his Spirit upon our churches; but not unfrequently, in the midst of a revival of religion, a sectarian spirit shows itself, and the Comforter is grieved away.

Christian brethren on both sides, these things ought not so to be. And the period, as I think has arrived, when they cannot so continue but a little longer. We are obviously living in the near approach of the Millennium,—in the last days, when a tremendous conflict is to be expected between the friends and the enemies of God. Things are manifestly preparing, not only in our own country, but in Europe, and in heathen lands, for such a conflict. In our present divided state, are we prepared to meet it? And is it not high time that effectual measures were taken, to bring down the mountains, and raise the vallies, and thus prepare the way of the Lord? If we longer neglect to take such measures ourselves, God may be expected in righteous judgment to take them for us. He may so heat the furnace of his providence, as to melt down all our minor distinctions. He may draw a band of fire around his church, till its members come to feel and act as one body.

As Evangelical Baptists and Pedobaptists seem not likely to agree at present in regard to one of the special ordinances of the Gospel, but do agree in regard to the nature and obligations of the other, I can see no good reason why they should not, occasionally at least, partake of the latter ordinance together. In this way they would wipe off much of the reproach which now attaches to them, and manifest to the world that, notwithstanding remaining differences, they do feel, and are resolved to act, as the disciples of a common Saviour. I know, in-

deed, if this point were gained, that much wisdom and grace would still be needed, in order to secure and perpetuate peace. For combustible materials would remain on both sides, in the midst of which discordant spirits might scatter their firebrands, and easily blow them to a flame. But Christian love would overcome all difficulties, and quench the latent sparks of contention before they were kindled. By the removal of close communion, one source of contention in the church would be dried up, and one effectual step would be taken towards a complete and final union. The parties, by being brought into more intimate relations, would be in a better situation to dispose of remaining differences; and the Saviour, who prayed so fervently while on earth for the peace of his followers, might be expected to approve and bestow his blessing.

APPENDIX.

[Note A.]

The following pertinent remarks are from Dr. Samuel Austin's Rejoinder in his controversy with Mr. Merrill. "In beseiged cities, where there are thousands and hundreds of thousands of people; in sandy deserts, like those of Africa, Arabia, and Palestine; in the northern regions, where the streams, if there be any, are shut up with impenetrable ice; and in severe and extensive droughts, like that which took place in the time of Ahab; sufficiency of water for animal subsistence is scarcely to be procured. Now suppose God should, according to his predictions, pour out plentiful effusions of his Spirit, so that all the inhabitants of one of these regions or cities should be born in a day. Upon the Baptist hypothesis, there is an absolute impossibility that they should be baptized, while there is this scarcity of water, and this may last as long as they live." p. 41.

[Note B.]

The following remarks of Professor Stuart, on Rom. vi. 4, will be read with interest by every candid inquirer.

"*We have been buried with him, then, by baptism into his death;* i. e. we are (by being baptized into his death) buried as he was, *συνετάφημεν*, where *συν* means *like, in like manner with.*

"Most commentators have maintained, that *συνετάφημεν* has here a necessary reference to the mode of *literal*

baptism, which, they say, was by *immersion;* and this, they think, affords ground for the employment of the image used by the Apostle, because *immersion* (under water) may be compared to *burial* (under the earth.) It is difficult, perhaps, to procure a patient re-hearing for this subject, so long regarded by some as being out of fair dispute. Nevertheless, as my own conviction is not, after protracted and repeated examinations, accordant here with that of commentators in general, I feel constrained briefly to state my reasons.

"The first is, that in the verse before us there is a plain *antithesis;* one so plain that it is impossible to overlook it. If now *συνετάφημεν* is to be interpreted in a *physical* way, i. e. as meaning baptism in a physical sense, where is the corresponding *physical* idea, in the opposite part of the antithesis or comparison? Plainly there is no such *physical* idea or reference in the other part of the antithesis. The *resurrection* there spoken of, is entirely a *moral, spiritual* one; for it is one which Christians have already experienced, during the present life; as may be fully seen by comparing vs. 5, 11, below. I take it for granted, that after *ἡμεῖς* in v. 4, *ἐγερθέντες* is implied; since the nature of the comparison, the preceding *ὡς ἠγέρθη Χριστός*, and v. 5, make this entirely plain.

"If we turn now to the passage in Col. ii. 12, (which is altogether parallel with the verse under examination, and has very often been agitated by polemic writers on the subject of baptism,) we shall there find more conclusive reason still, to argue as above respecting the nature of the *antithesis* presented. "We have been buried with him [Christ] by *baptism.*" What now is the *opposite* of this? What is the kind of *resurrection* from this grave in which Christians have been buried? The Apostle tells us: "We have risen with him [Christ,] by faith wrought by the power of God [*τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ*,] who raised him [Christ] from the dead." Here, there is a *resurrection by faith*, i. e. a *spiritual, moral* one. Why then should we look for a *physical* meaning in the antithesis? If one part of the antithesis is to be construed in a manner entirely *moral* or *spiritual*, why should we not construe the other in the like manner? To understand *συνετάφημεν*, then, of a *literal burial under water*, is to

understand it in a manner which the laws of interpretation appear to forbid.

"Nothing can be plainer, than that the word *συνετάφημεν*, in Rom. vi. 4, is equivalent in sense to the word *ἀπεθάνομεν* in v. 8. It seems to be adopted merely for the sake of rendering more striking the image of a *resurrection*, which the Apostle employs in the other part of the antithesis. *A resurrection from the grave* is a natural phrase, when one is speaking with respect to the subject of a *resurrection;* see John v. 28, 29; comp. Dan. xii. 2. In accordance with this statement, the context does most plainly speak, both in respect to Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12. For in respect to Rom. vi. 4, the Apostle goes on in the very next verse, (as is usual with him,) to present the same idea which is contained in v. 4, in a different costume. V. 5 (which is a mere epexegesis of v. 4) says: *If we have been homogeneous* (*σύμφυτοι* like, of the same kind) *with Christ* IN HIS DEATH, *then shall we be in his resurrection.* The same idea and explanation is repeated in v. 8—*ἀπεθάνομεν—συζήσομεν*, and the whole is summarily explained in v. 11; *So reckon ye yourselves to be νεκρούς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ.*

"Exactly in the same manner has the Apostle gone on to explain *συμπαφέντες* in Col. ii. 12. In v. 13 he adds: *You νεκρούς in your offences. . . . συνεζωοποίησε, has he* [God] *made alive with him* [Christ] *having forgiven us all our offences.*

"There can be no real ground for question, then, that by *συμπάφημεν*, in both cases, is meant neither more nor less than by *ἀπεθάνομεν*, *νεκροί*, etc. The epexegesis added in both cases, seems to make this quite plain.

"The only reason, then, which I can find, why *συνετάφημεν* is preferred in Rom. vi. 4, and in Col. ii. 12, is, as has been suggested above, that the language may be a fuller antithesis of the word *resurrection*, which is employed in the corresponding part of the comparison. "You who were [dead] buried with Christ," gives energy to the expression.

(*c*) "But my principal difficulty in respect to the usual exegesis of *συνετάφημεν* is, that the image or figure of *immersion, baptism*, is, so far as I know, no where else in Scripture employed as a symbol of *burial in the grave.* Nor can I think that it is a very natural symbol of burial.

The obvious import of *washing with water*, or immersing in water, is, that it is symbolical of purity, cleansing, purification. But how will this aptly signify *burying in the grave*, the place of corruption, loathsomeness, and destruction?

"For these reasons, I feel inclined to doubt the usual exegesis of the passage before us, and to believe that the Apostle had in view only a burying which is *moral* and *spiritual;* for the same reasons that he had a *moral* and *spiritual* (not a physical) resurrection in view, in the corresponding part of the antithesis.

"Indeed, what else but a *moral burying* can be meant, when the Apostle goes on to say: *We are buried with him* [not by baptism only, but] *by baptism* INTO HIS DEATH? Of course, it will not be contended, that a literal *physical* burying is here meant, but only a *moral* one. And although the words, *into his death*, are not inserted in Col. ii. 12; yet, as the following verse there shows, they are plainly implied. In fact it is plain, that reference is here made to *baptism*, because, when that rite was performed, the Christian promised to renounce sin and to mortify all his evil desires, and thus to die unto sin that he might live unto God. I cannot see, therefore, that there is any more necessary reference here to the *modus* of baptism, than there is to the *modus* of the resurrection. The one may as well be maintained as the other.

"I am aware, however, that one may say: 'I admit that the burial with Christ has a *moral* sense, and only such an one; but then the language in which this idea is conveyed (*συμετάφημεν,*) is evidently borrowed from the custom of immersion.' In reply to this, I would refer to the considerations under (*c*) above. The possibility of the usage I admit; but to show that the image is natural, and obvious, and that it is a part of Scripture usage elsewhere, is what seems important, in order to produce entire satisfaction to the mind of a philological inquirer. At any rate, I cannot at present think the case to be clear enough, to entitle any one to employ this passage with confidence, in a contest respecting the mode of baptism."—*Commentary on Romans, p.* 252—255.

[Note C.]

"It is very common," says Dr. Wardlaw, "to speak of the Old and New Testament churches, as if they were *quite distinct* from each other; as if, when the latter was introduced, the former had been entirely removed, and succeeded by something totally new. But this is far from being the style in which the matter is represented, either in the Old Testament Scriptures, or in the New. In both, the ancient church is spoken of, not as annihilated, and succeeded by another, but as visited, comforted, purified, raised up, and gloriously restored from decline and corruption. If in some passages the idea of complete *renovation* appears to be suggested, we need not be surprised that such language should be applied to a change in the state of the church so remarkable,—to a revival so eminently glorious. The prosperity of the church in the latter days is represented by the "creation of new heavens and a new earth, so that the former should not be remembered, nor come into mind."—If such language is employed to elevate our conceptions and anticipations of that blessed era, we might surely expect terms somewhat similar to be used, in reference to the time when "God was to be manifested in the flesh," "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel."

"The fact is, that when the prophets of the Old Testament predict the calling of the Gentiles at the fulness of time, they represent them as brought in to the previously existing church, although in its renovated and remodelled state:—and when the prophets of the New Testament foretell the restoration of the Jews, it is under the idea of being brought in again to the same church from which, on account of their unbelief, they had been ejected."—*Dissertation on Infant Baptism, p.* 63.

[Note D.]

"I entirely agree," says Mr. Carson, "with those who consider this covenant (the covenant with Abraham) as having a letter and a spirit. For the accomplishment of the grand promise, that all nations should be blessed in

Abraham, three promises were given to him. First, a numerous posterity which was fulfilled in the letter, in the nation of Israel. It was fulfilled in the spirit, by the divine constitution, that makes all believers the children of Abraham. The unbelieving Jews were Abraham's children as to the flesh, yet there is a sense in which Jesus denies that they were the children of Abraham. The second promise was to be a God to him and his seed, which was fulfilled in the letter by his protection of Israel in Egypt,—his delivering of them from bondage,—his taking them into covenant at Sinai,—and all his subsequent dealings with them in their generations, till they were cast off by their rejection of Christ. This promise is fulfilled in the spirit, by God's being a God to all believers, and to them alone, Rom. iv. 11, 12, in a higher sense than he was to Israel, Jer. xxxi. 33. The third promise was of the land of Canaan, fulfilled in the letter to Israel, and in the spirit fulfilled to the true Israel in the possession of the heavenly inheritance. In accordance with this double sense of the promises of this covenant, the kingdom of God in Israel, with its officers, laws, worship, &c. is a visible model of the invisible kingdom of Christ. The typical ordinances, which exhibited the truths of the gospel in figure, form one of the most conclusive evidences of Christianity; and present spiritual things to the mind in so definite and striking a manner, that they add the greatest lustre to the doctrines of grace. What a striking emblem of the incarnation have we in God's dwelling in the tabernacle and temple! How clearly do we see substitution and imputation in the laying on of hands on the victim! How blind must they be, who do not see the atonement by the blood of Christ, in the sacrifices of Israel!

"This appears to me to be the only view of the covenant of Abraham, that will suit every thing said of it in the word of God. That it has a letter and a spirit, is true, and analogous to every part of the Old Testament." *Carson and Cox on Baptism, p.* 344.

[Note E.]

The following remarks are from the pen of Rev. George S. Faber. "Circumcision and baptism are two sacramental signs of *exactly the same import.* They must, therefore, to all affective purposes, be mutually the same with each other: For a sign being altogether arbitrary, if it had pleased God to shadow out regeneration by a hundred different signs, all these hundred signs would still constitute but a single sacrament." Sermons, Vol. i. Sermon ix.

Dr. Wardlaw supposes, that besides its import as denoting the "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh," circumcision was, in all probability, intended as a sign that the seed, in whom all nations were to be blessed, *should come from the loins of Abraham.* Of this it was a significant emblem and remembrancer. The promise of the Messiah was restricted to the line of descent by Isaac. In this line, therefore, it became a memorial of the promise that Messiah should be made flesh amongst them. And I doubt not that, in other lines also of descent from Abraham, this rite, originally, by the command of God, administered to all his family, had its influence, in a general way, in preserving the idea and expectation of the promised seed. If this be well founded, we at once perceive a good reason why circumcision should be abolished *when this seed came;* and why another rite should be substituted in its place, which continued to signify as expressly, or more so, the "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh," while it was *not all significant of that part* of the meaning of the former symbol, which had now received its fulfilment. *Dissertation on Infant Baptism,* p. 28.

[Note F.]

"*The rite of Infant Baptism,*" says Dr. Woods, "*manifestly corresponds with the natural relation between parents and children.* It is not enough to say that there is no inconsistency between the two things, and that the relation of parents and children can afford no objection

against Infant Baptism. For nothing is more evident than that this rite has a perfect *suitableness* to the relation of parents and children. This relation is of such a nature and attended with such circumstances, that Infant Baptism becomes obviously, and in the highest degree, just and proper. I acknowledge that this argument does not, by itself, prove Infant Baptism to have been appointed by God, and to be obligatory upon Christians. But it shows at least, that, if God was pleased to appoint it, the appointment must be regarded as having a perfect fitness and propriety." *Lectures on Infant Baptism*, p. 26.

Some of the wiser heathen nations, instructed only by nature and reason, were led to practice a rite resembling infant baptism, "It was the custom of the Romans, on the ninth day from the child's birth (which was called the *lustrical*, or day of *purification*) for its friends and relatives to bring it to the temple, and before the altars of the gods to give it a name, and recommend it to the protection of some tutelar deity." A ceremony of the like nature was also common among the Greeks. *See Middleton's Life of Cicero, Vol. i. p. 6.*

[Note G.]

Lightfoot, after having established the *fact* of Proselyte baptism, in his Horæ Hebraicæ on Matt. iii. 6, concludes his argument with the following pertinent remarks. "Hence we see the reason why, in the New Testament, the subjects of baptism are not prescribed by a more explicit rule. The Anabaptists object, *It is not commanded that infants should be baptized; therefore they should not be baptized.* But I say, *It is not prohibited that infants should be baptized; therefore they should be baptized.* And the reason is plain; for since the baptism of children was familiarly known and very often practised in the Jewish church in the admission of proselytes, there was no need that it should be confirmed by an express precept, when baptism came to be an evangelical sacrament. For Christ took baptism into his hands, and into evangelical use *as he found it;* with this difference only, that he promoted it to a more worthy end, and a more important

purpose. The whole nation knew perfectly well that little children had always been baptized. That he had no need of an express command, which was in common and uniform practice.

Suppose Christ had published an edict in these words, *Let all persons assemble on the Lord's day for public worship in the church;* he would be insane who should thence infer that prayers, and preaching, and singing of praises were not to be celebrated on the Lord's day, in the public assemblies, because there was no mention of them in the edict. For the edict provides for the public observance of the day *in the general;* and concerning the particular forms of worship, there was no need that it should make provision, these being well known and in constant use at the time when the edict was given. But this precisely illustrates the case of baptism, when established by Christ for an evangelical sacrament, by which all should be admitted to a profession of the gospel, as proselytes had been admitted to the religion of the Jews. In regard to particulars, such as the mode of baptizing, and the age and sex of those to be baptized, there was no need of an express rule, because these were sufficiently known from common use.

On the contrary; there was need of *a plain and open prohibition*, if our Saviour designed that infants should not be baptized. For when through all preceding ages, their baptism had been in common use, if he had intended that the custom should be abolished, he would have expressly prohibited it. His silence, therefore, and that of Scripture in this matter, *confirms Pedobaptism and establishes it, in all succeeding ages.*"

To the same purpose are the following remarks of Wetstein, in his Commentary on Matt. xxviii. 19. "In this passage, which contains the institution of baptism, a lax and mild exposition of the word μαθητεύσατε is to be preferred to a rigid, straight-laced interpretation; and that this kind of interpretation was adopted by the Apostles, I make no doubt. For since they could not be ignorant that the boys and infants of Jews were to be circumcised, so as to become Jews, and be brought into covenant, and that the boys and infants of Gentile proselytes were not only themselves called proselytes, and circumcised, but were also *baptized*, as I have before fully proved; I do

not see how it could enter into their thoughts to expunge boys and infants from the list of disciples, or from baptism, *unless they had been excluded by the express injunctions of Christ*, which we nowhere find ?"

[Note H.]

It will be said, perhaps, that the command to teach, or (*μαθευτευσατε*) *disciple* the nations, in Matt. xxviii. 19, necessarily limits the subsequent command to baptize them. None can properly be baptized, but those who have already become disciples. And what is it to become a disciple ? Is it not to become a *pupil*, a *learner* ? Those, therefore, who have become *learners*, or are placed in a situation to be *learners*, in the things pertaining to the kingdom of Christ (and such certainly are all the children of faithful, covenanting parents) may with the strictest propriety be denominated *disciples*. Thus Timothy was a disciple (*αποβρεφους*) from his infancy. 2 Tim. iii. 15. And Justin Martyr speaks of some, " who had been made disciples to Christ (*εκ παιδων*) from their childhood." Apol. i. Among the Jews, not only were those called disciples who *had been taught*, but those who came into a situation *to be taught*. "*Make me a proselyte*, said a Gentile to Hillel, *that thou mayest teach me.*" Bab. Talmud.

Wetstein makes three classes of disciples, viz : (*των μαθοντων, των μανθοντων, και των μαθησομενων*) those *having been taught, those being taught*, and those *to be taught*. " Certainly," he says, " a person may be made any one's disciple, either when he knowingly and voluntarily, of his own judgment and will, commits himself to any one for instruction ; or when, by his parents or guardians, in whose power he is placed, he is so committed and entrusted. And he who is receiving his *first lesson* is as much a disciple, as he who has attended on the whole course of instruction. Nay, he who is committed by his father to the care of any master, *is already his disciple, before he has been taught his first lessons.*" Com. on Matt. xxviii. 19.

But if this sense of the term disciple should be reject-

ed, it is believed the command of our Saviour is perfectly consistent, and (considering the circumstances under which it was uttered) is *alone* consistent, with Pedobaptism. 'Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them and their children (according to the known and established custom in the case of circumcision, and in the reception of proselytes) into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Situated as the Apostles were, it seems they must have understood their Lord's precept with this latitude. I see not how they could have interpreted it in any other manner.

It has been said, also, that the requisition of *faith* in order to baptism necessarily limits the command to baptize. But of whom is this requisition made? Of adult persons or infants? Of adults certainly, as they alone are capable of understanding and complying with it. Of course, *it has no respect to infants;* and it is just such a requisition as all Evangelical Pedobaptists make, when addressing that class of persons to whom it was addressed by the Apostles. We all say, when addressing unbaptized adults, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus." "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." Acts ii. 38. viii. 37.

It is admitted, on all sides, that Cyprian, the venerable Bishop of Carthage, was a Pedobaptist. Yet he urged the necessity of faith and repentance in order to baptism, just as the apostles did, and as Evangelical Pedobaptists do in our own times. He says those out of Christ will perish, "unless they come *with repentance* to that only salutary sacrament of the church,"—meaning baptism." Epis. 75.

The remarks of Dr. Woods, in reply to this objection, are judicious and conclusive. "Of whom was faith required in order to Baptism? Of those, evidently, who were capable of understanding the nature of the requisition. The command to believe could relate to no other. This was so perfectly obvious, that no teacher of Christianity could have any occasion to mention it. This command, or any other command, coming from a just God, must be understood as relating to those only, who were capable of complying with it. So that the fact, stated exactly, was this; *those who were capable of believing,* that is, *adult persons were required to believe, in order*

to be baptized. A requisition, not unlike this, was made under the former dispensation. Adult persons, in order to be admitted by circumcision into the society of God's people were required to renounce idolatry, to believe in the God of Abraham, and to submit to the institutions and laws which he gave by Moses. Such faith as this, under the *Mosaic* economy, answered to the faith which is required under the *Christian* economy. The requisition of faith, then, in order to Baptism, has nothing new in it, but this, that the faith required is to be adapted to the circumstances of the Christian dispensation. Whereas the faith required before, was to be adapted to the Mosaic dispensation. Thus, in regard to adult persons, the case is very similar under both dispensations. How then can the fact, that Christ required adult persons to believe in order to be baptized, prove that Baptism was to be more limited in its application, than circumcision?" *Lectures on Infant Baptism,* p. 157.

[Note I.]

"It is a remarkable fact," says Dr. Wardlaw, "that we have no mention of any thing resembling the baptism of households or families, in the accounts of the propagation of the gospel by our Baptist brethren. That the apostles baptized families, no believer of the scripture history can doubt; and we have seen, that the manner in which such baptisms are recorded, or referred to, indicates no extraordinary thing. Now it surely *is* an extraordinary thing, that in the journals and periodical accounts of Baptist missions in heathen countries, we should never meet with any thing of the kind. I question, whether, in the thirty years of the history of the Baptist mission in India, there is to be found a single instance of the baptism of a household. When do we find a Baptist missionary saying, "When she was baptized and her family"—or, "I baptized the family of Krishnoo," or any other convert? We have the baptism of individuals; but nothing corresponding to the apostolic baptism of families. This fact is a strong corroborative proof, that there is some difference between their practice and that of the apostles. If the practice of both were the same,

there might surely be expected *some little* correspondence in the facts connected with it." *Dissertation on Infant Baptism, p.* 109.

[Note J.]

It has been often said that the ancient Britons did not baptize their children; and that they were persuaded to commence baptizing them by Augustine, a Benedictine monk, in the sixth century. But these assertions have been shown to be without foundation. The mistake arose from an imperfect quotation of the history of the venerable Bede. Bede represents Augustine as requiring the Britons to "perform the office of baptizing, *according to the custom of the Romish church.*" But he is falsely quoted by Fabian as saying, that Augustine required the Britons to "*give christendom to their children;*"—from which quotation it has been inferred that, previously, they *did not* "give christendom to their children."

If this pretence needed further refutation, we might recur to the testimony of Pelagius, who was born and bred in Britain, and was perfectly acquainted with the customs of Christians in that country. Yet he affirms that he "never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants."

It has been said, also, that the Waldenses did not baptize their children. This assertion is founded chiefly on the testimony of the Romanists, and may have arisen from the unwillingness of that persecuted people to suffer their children to be baptized by the Romish priests.—That the great body of the Waldenses practised infant baptism, we have conclusive evidence in their own standard writings. The following passages are from a Waldensian Catechism, supposed to have been written as early as A. D. 1100. "There are two sacraments, one of water, and the other of aliment, that is, of bread and wine. The first is called baptism, or in our language *a washing with water*, whether of a river or a fountain; and it must be administered in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." "Children are

TO BE PRESENTED FOR BAPTISM; and this should be done by them to whom they are most nearly related, such as parents, or those to whom God has given this office of love."

Dr. Murdock, in the notes to his translation of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, says, "That the Mennonites" (or Continental Anabaptists) "in most of the points in which they appeared singular among Protestants, bore a nearer resemblance to the proper Waldenses, the Wickliffites, and the Hussites, than the other Protestants, or the Lutherans and the Reformed did, is *very far from being true*. On the contrary, it is a well known historic fact, that in the sixteenth century, the genuine descendants of the old Waldensians, Wickliffites, and Hussites, who were numerous in France, England, Bohemia, Moravia, &c. *readily united with the Lutheran and Reformed communities, and at length became absorbed in them;* and that *very few, if any, of them ever manifested a preference for the Mennonites, or for any of the Antipedobaptist sects of that age.* The history of the Reformation, in all the countries where these ancient sects were found fully establishes this fact, which is so adverse to the supposition of a legitimate descent of the Mennonites from the pure Waldensians. The first Mennonites were not persons who had before borne the name of Waldensians, or who were known descendants of Waldensians; nor did they originate either in or near the countries where the Waldensians in that age resided. And if we endeavor to trace the history of that grand peculiarity of all Mennonites, their confining baptism to adult believers, and rejecting infant baptism altogether, we shall find, that at the time Menno first embraced it, it existed among the numerous German Anabaptists, but *not among the Waldenses of France or Bohemia, who were then universally believers in infant baptism*, and were in fraternal communion with the Lutheran and reformed churches. These Waldensian Pedobaptists moreover declared, that *they held the same belief which their fathers had maintained for several centuries, and they appealed to their old books to make good their assertions.* Nor does Ecclesiastical history appear to me to disprove the truth of their assertion. There were indeed various mystical sects, tinctured more or less with Manichean views, in the

twelfth and following centuries, who rejected all water baptism, on much the same grounds as the Quakers still do; and some of these assailed infant baptism especially, as being peculiarly unsuitable and absurd. There is also pretty good evidence that, early in the twelfth century, Peter de Brays, and his successor Henry, with their followers, the Petrobrüssians and Henricians, did at first reject infant baptism, without discarding all baptism. But Peter Waldo arose soon after, and gave birth to the proper Waldensians; and we hear no more of the Petrobrussians and Henricians. They probably gave up their opposition to infant baptism." See Leger's Gen. Hist. of the Churches of the Waldenses; Jo. Paul Perrin's Hist. of the Waldenses; Wall's Hist. of Infant Baptism, P. ii. chap. 7; and Milner's Ecc. Hist. Vol. iii. p. 426.

[Note K.]

It has been said that the infant children of Jewish parents were church members in full communion, and were taken, with their parents, to the Passover and other festivals. (See Judson's Sermon, p. 39.) But this, we have good reason to believe, was not the case. When our Saviour was *twelve years old*, he went up to Jerusalem to the Passover, *according to the custom of the feast*. Luke ii. 42. The most respectable commentators, and others, decide, that this was as early as the Jewish children were permitted to be present on such occasions.

Hyrcanus in Josephus. "The law forbids the son to *eat of the sacrifice*, before he has come to the temple, and there *presented an offering to God*."*

Calvin. "The Passover, which has been succeeded by the sacred supper, did not admit guests of all descriptions promiscuously, but was rightly eaten only by those *who were of sufficient age to be able to inquire into its meaning*."†

Bp. Patrick. "When children were *twelve years old*, their parents were bound to bring them to the temple at

* Antiq. Lib. xii. Cap. iv. Sect. 8.

† Institutes, Lib. iv. Cap. xvi. Sec. 30.

the Passover, where, seeing what was done, they would be led to inquire, "What mean ye by these things?"*

Poole. "Children, at the age of *twelve years*, were brought by their parents to the temple; and from that time, they began to *eat of the Passover and other sacrifices*."†

Rosenmuller. "The Jews were accustomed to bring their sons, who had attained to their *twelfth year*, to the festivals at Jerusalem."‡

Kuinoel. "It was a custom of the Jews in those times (the time of Christ) that youths who had attained to the age of *twelve years*, should be brought to the festivals at Jerusalem."‖

Bloomfield. "The custom was, not to take them (the Jewish children) to the Passover, until they should have attained the years of puberty, a period which the Rabbins tell us was fixed at the *twelfth year*, when they were held amenable to the law, and were called sons of precept. Then were they also INTRODUCED INTO THE CHURCH, initiated into its doctrines and ceremonies, and consequently were taken with their relations to Jerusalem at the festivals."§

The following extract from Dr. Gill, an eminent Baptist commentator, is much to the purpose. "According to the maxims of the Jews, persons were not obliged to the duties of the law, or subject to the penalties of it in case of non-performance, until they were, a *female*, at the age of *twelve years and one day*, and a *male*, at the age of *thirteen years and one day*." "They were not reckoned ADULT CHURCH MEMBERS TILL THEN; nor then either, unless *worthy persons;* for so it is said, '*He that is worthy is called, at thirteen years of age, a son of the congregation of Israel*,' that is, A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH."¶

[NOTE L.]

"Let it not be said," says Dr. Wardlaw, "that parents may have a sufficiently strong feeling of their duty to

* Com. on Ex. xii. † Synopsis on Ex. xii. 26.
‡ Com. on Luke ii. 42. ‖ Com. on Luke ii. 42.
§ Critical Digest on Luke ii. 42. ¶ Com. on Luke ii. 42.

their children, and may fulfil that duty equally well with others, although they do not see the Scripture authority for their baptism. I do not deny, that a Baptist may be exemplary in the Christian tuition of his family, and that many a Pedobaptist may be very much the contrary. But this is not the question. I can conceive of a Christian, from certain conscientious but unscriptural and groundless scruples, living for successive years in the neglect of the ordinance of the Lord's supper, and yet, to all appearance, influenced as much as others, in his general character, by the habitual remembrance of his Redeemer. We should never infer from such a case, that the ordinance was useless. Neither ought we in the other. If God has given promises to his people and their seed, promises fitted to stimulate believing parents to the fulfilment of their sacred trust, and has instituted an ordinance in which these promises are recognized and pledged to them, it does not become us to neglect the gracious and pleasing rite, on the ground that we can keep the promises sufficiently well in mind without it. It is kind in that God who "knoweth our frame," not only to give us his word, but to embody, as it were, that word to our senses, to confirm it to our faith, and to impress it upon our memories and hearts, by significant outward institutions."—*Dissertation on Infant Baptism, p.* 140.

[Note M.]

"When the Apostle, in his epistles, addressing himself to the churches, introduces the subject of the instruction and spiritual care of children, it is evident, that he devolves the important charge, not upon the associated body of believers, but on the parents amongst them to whom the children belonged. The very address, it is true, *to children*, as connected with the community of God's people, testifies the interest felt in them by the Apostle himself, and contains a virtual admonition to the churches, to take care that they were not neglected. By connecting this with the immediately subjoined charge to parents, we are naturally led to the conclusion, that the principal way in which the care of the churches for the

spiritual interest of the children connected with them ought to show itself, is their seeing to it that the parents discharge their duty faithfully. The parents have, by apostolic authority, as well as by the dictate of nature, the immediate charge of the children; and the church, by the same divine authority, has the immediate oversight of the parents. The discipline of the churches ought certainly to be considered as extending to every description of sin. The violation, or neglect, of the parental trust, is a sin, of which cognizance ought to be taken, as well as of others. If parents, who are members of a church, are allowed to go on in such violation and neglect, the church is chargeable with an omission of duty. "Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," is as plain and explicit a command, as "Thou shalt not steal," or "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." The violation of the one may not be of so easy detection, as that of the others. There may even, in certain cases, be circumstances of delicacy and difficulty, that require any cognizance of parental conduct to be gone about with great prudence, and cautious discrimination. But the *principle* of discipline is, in both cases, the same. We must not allow sin to be committed, and persisted in, without endeavoring, by scriptural means, to bring the offender to repentance. And, surely, there is no sin which it is of more consequence to have corrected by repentance, than one which affects the best interest of the rising generation, and thus tends deeply to injure the prosperity of the church, and the cause and glory of Christ."—*Wardlaw's Dissertation on Infant Baptism, pp.* 155, 156.